

The

PERALTA TEACHER

Peralta Federation of Teachers, CFT, AFL-CIO – Democracy in Education

FOR TEACHER
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From the President



Greetings Faculty

Much has happened since our last newsletter. The country held an historic presidential election. The number of people who were active in the electoral process this year was inspiring. Hopefully they will remain vocal citizens.

Locally, we will desperately need your voices as the Governor's proposed budget cuts roll out. Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed a \$332 million dollar cut to community colleges in his current budget. The impact on Peralta would be the potential loss of up to \$10,000,000 dollars over the next two years. The District, if it must make cuts, should minimize their impact on students. We cannot accept closing of classes, shutting down of student services, nor the letting go of our part time faculty as the first and primary solutions to this budget crisis. First, we should be demanding from our legislators that there be an increase in revenue sources for the state. If not, our schools will be strangled and our students will be forced to either leave- give up on their educational aspirations- or stay in a crippled system. We must also address our District Administration. We cannot just hope things will work out. It will take our firm and persistent voices to save our classes and student services. Each one of us must take action.

End of Year Check List:

- ✓ Keep a copy of your Spring assignment letter (Article 18 (A) 12 PFT contract) & if you didn't get one ask your Dean & copy PFT in your email.
 - ✓ Dues/fees are tax deductible
 - ✓ Check your paycheck summary: if it states "Peralta Fed Dues" you are a member of your union. If not, fill out attached membership form.
 - ✓ Read Article 24 (A) on Faculty Service Areas about submitting and updating your FSAs by 2/15/09
- Part-time Faculty, Check these off too:**
- ✓ Part-time office hours pay, for those eligible, are paid at the end of December
 - ✓ Re-enrollment for 50/50 program is by 2/2/09 (New enrollees : CORESOURCE may apply a waiting period for any preexisting conditions)
 - ✓ If you are in the Preferential Rehire Pool but you were not offered your base load for Spring 2009, please contact the PFT
 - ✓ If you are available for full-time work, during the winter break, you may file for unemployment

PFT ALERTS & REMINDERS:

Don't miss the latest news & Negotiation Update (p. 5)

Part-time Faculty Meeting, 12:-1:00pm, Merritt, R 217

General Membership: Dec. 3rd, 3:-5:00pm at Laney, A 266

Executive Council Meetings

1st and 3rd Thursday, 3:-5:00pm (next up Dec. 4th) at PFT

PFT's Holiday Party: Dec.18th 4:-6:00 PM

500 E. 8th Street, Suite B, Oakland, CA 94606

During this period of budget cuts, it is important that each faculty member update their FSA (Faculty Service Area) information with their Dean. Your FSAs are the information the District uses to determine what courses you are eligible to teach, so you must have all your current information on file with your Dean. Your Dean should have a list of possible FSAs and minimum qualifications for each FSA. The deadline for updating your FSAs for this year is February 15, 2009. Reviewing and updating your FSA is an important protection for faculty members.

Unfortunately many of our students are dealing with an additional financial crisis this semester. Thousands of students have gone without some portion of financial aid for a good deal of the current semester primarily as a result of the District buying a new financial aid program- Regent- that turned out to have compatibility problems with our current overall software system and was not designed for multi-college district use. The District did not know what problems would arise with the new system until it was too late because they failed to properly test the system ahead of time. Neither did they run the new system in parallel with the old in case they encountered problems in implementation. The students have been demonstrative at both Board meetings and Board Listening Sessions, demanding answers to the myriad of problems they have faced. We should be supporting and echoing our students by letting the District know that they should stop investing in new software programs without truly understanding how the programs work, or without talking to the real “end users” prior to programming the software. And finally, the District must begin to beta test programs for a reasonable amount of time before using these new systems as our only resource. We seem to be perpetually operating in a crisis mode as a result of poor planning and policies regarding I.T. systems. There is hardly a faculty member that has not been frustrated by the PASSPORT system- another software program poorly implemented. The PFT has repeatedly asked for more training and to move towards a paperless system more deliberately by using a timeline that takes in to account the variety of issues that need to be resolved as transitions are being made. We have also urged the District to provide multiple methods of enrollment and hard copies of roll books when the online roll book was not available. Now we are looking at the additional workload issues that this new technology is creating for the faculty.

My biggest focus this semester has been on contract development. Rick Greenspan, our Chief Negotiator,

and I attended contract development meetings organized by the PFT reps. at each college this semester. I have also been at the majority of meetings at each college called specifically to address part time issues related to our contract. In addition, I held workshops on our contract on Professional Development Day and attended Department meetings in an attempt to communicate with the faculty on this vital issue. Our primary purpose at the contract development meetings was to gather information about what faculty felt needed to be addressed as we open the contract up for negotiation this spring. The PFT reps., Rick and I have tried to listen, record and discuss the array of ideas the faculty have brought forth during the chapter meetings. The PFT has also had one membership meeting focused on contract development and we will have one more this semester- on Wednesday, December 3, at 3pm at Laney College in Room A266.

The process of contract development is pretty straightforward: gathering concerns and the wishes of the faculty. It is also to answer questions faculty have about the process, the timeline, and what the District may be asking of faculty during the bargaining process. We have taken each idea that has been suggested and categorized them into major areas: Money issues, Non money issues, and issues that may best be dealt with outside of negotiating setting. Recently our Chief Negotiator took all the suggestions and linked them to particular Articles in our Contract, so we could get a sense of what Articles may need to be opened up during negotiations. We have over 25 ideas, which the PFT Executive Council will review and then bring to the membership for discussion. Ultimately, the membership will decide the priorities the negotiating team will work on for this contract negotiation. Some consistent themes that I have heard at every college are:

Improved health care for post 2004 full time hires and better dental and vision care for all faculty

Parity in terms of pay, office hours and benefits for part time faculty

The need for more full time hires

Concern over increased workload without compensation as a result of accreditation, SLOs, going “paperless” and cutbacks of classified staff.

It is your obligation and it's in your interest to attend the membership meeting where we discuss the topics to be negotiated and be a part of the democratic decision making process. I hope to see you all on the 3rd of December.

The PFT has also been busy with a few other key concerns this semester. We asked the faculty to write and speak out on the Chancellor's proposed reconfiguration plan which would have included new administrative positions at the District Office. We opposed his plan and worked with Board members, the Academic Senates and other employees to prevent the reconfiguration.

We were involved in voter registration and education on the campuses and the PAC (Political Action Committee of the PFT) endorsed and supported Board of Trustee members that were up for re-election. The PAC endorsed: Cy Gulassa, Nicky Gonzales-Yuen, Bill Withrow and Marlon McWilson. Marlon McWilson was defeated by the incumbent Marcie Hodge; all the other endorsed candidates ran unopposed and will serve another term on the Board of Trustees.

As always, we continue to represent faculty members at discipline hearings, resolve benefits, leave and pay issues as well as help with load and assignment problems. We have been discussing within the Exec. Council how the PFT can address the workload increase as a result of SLOs requirements and we have been advocating for a uniform District Wide payment and selection process for SLO work. We continue to work on trying to get the part-time priority re-hire pool and evaluations completed. We are also working with the District to streamline the part time priority re-hire pool process, but until new language is bargained, the contract wording is in effect.

As we enter this period of being reflective and hopefully thankful, I would like to thank all the PFT reps. who give up their time at least twice a month to serve the faculty, and who usually spend many other hours helping faculty members on their campus. They do this for no extra pay or professional development credit, but as a public service to the faculty and because they believe our union is important. And many thanks to the staff at the PFT Office- without whom much of the work of the PFT would be impossible Thank you for letting me be your PFT President; I am always honored to serve you. I am also

thankful that so many of you, the faculty, give so much to the Peralta Community.

I hope your holiday season is joyful.

In Unity,
Debby Weintraub

Part-time Faculty News & Updates

By Cynthia Mahabir - PFT Part-time Representative

"If we're serious about building a twenty-first-century school system, we're going to have to take the teaching profession seriously. [...] It also means paying teachers what they're worth. There's no reason why an experienced, highly qualified, and effective teacher shouldn't earn \$100, 000 annually at the peak of his or her career," That's our President-Elect's recognition of the significance and value of our work to the well-being of the nation in *The Audacity of Hope*. Music to my ears! I feel like straightening my gait as I stroll onto my campus. In our current terms, it's the call for parity.

Parity: Parity has topped the list of issues we've discussed in the PT contract meetings thus far at Laney (October 30), College of Alameda (November 5), and Berkeley City College (November 12). Many thanks to the PT faculty members who participated in these meetings. The Merritt College meeting is scheduled for December 3, 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. in the Student Activities Chamber, R 217. If you missed the meeting at your college, you can attend this one at Merritt.

CFT Meetings/PT Workshop: *In other news, at the PT workshop ("Part-Time Faculty at Peralta: Who Are We and How Can We Build Community?") on Staff Development Day (October 22), a number of us viewed the results of the Spring 2008 PT Faculty Survey and shared ideas on strategies for building a sense of community. Also, on October 10, together with PFT President Debra Weintraub, Susan Schacher and I attended the Community College State Council meeting in Oakland. Among the PT issues discussed were the regularization of compensation for work on SLOs/ assessment schemes, and retirement benefits.*

Rehire Pool: For complete information on the PT rehire pool, visit **pft1603.org**. If you're eligible for a rehire pool evaluation (six out of the past ten semesters of employment at Peralta), speak to your dean and department chair. Also, evaluations for both inclusion

in the pool as well as for new PT faculty members (who should be evaluated in their first year of employment) should be proceeding as outlined in the contract. There has been no change. As stated in Article 30 of our contract (Part-Time Faculty Rehire Preference Pool Tentative Agreement, p. 3), one-third of the part-time faculty should be evaluated each year. **Note that PT faculty members can serve on these evaluation committees.**

Part-Time Faculty Rights: View and download from pft1603.org.

Unemployment Insurance: As the end-of-semester school break nears, you may qualify for unemployment compensation. For details, check 'Unemployment' at pft1603.org.

Please do everything possible to attend the PFT's General Membership meeting on December 3, 2008, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at Laney College in A 266. Your input is critical if we are to gain any improvement in our working conditions. Please note the date in your calendars and come. Also, stay in touch by contacting me at cmlaney2003@yahoo.com or at 464-3185.

Faculty Voices: Your letters & emails

RE: COCAL VIII Conference

There are two things I really like about going to teacher conferences (besides the food). I meet fascinating, engaged people in a collegial setting, and I get a larger view of our situation as educators; a better understanding of how our Peralta Colleges fit into the "big picture" of higher education statewide, nationally and internationally.

In August I attended the 8th conference of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, an organization of adjunct faculty working "to represent non-tenure track faculty and graduate students working in community colleges, state colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico."

While a big part of the COCAL conference was workshops on pedagogy and professional growth, I was most struck by some of the concepts I encountered;

- The dual nature of educators today; we are simultaneously both academic professionals, and academic workers employed by an administration; over 70% are temps with little or no security.
- The terms "part-time" and "full-time" don't fully represent our lives as educators. The key to Part-Timers' relationship to the school is that they are contingent, at-will employees with no security from one semester to the next.

COCAL addressed this in detail. We looked at the history of academic labor in the U.S. and worldwide, the casualization of academic labor promoted since the early '70's, and forces that have pushed that forward. We observed that Full-Time Tenure Track and Contingent faculty are often manipulated in opposition to each other as different categories of educators. Casualization was shown to be a corporate-led program that has degraded the profession of education for all faculty and students as well, overloading FTTT faculty while disengaging and fragmenting contingent faculty.

Cary Nelson, of the American Association of University Professors, put it in a global context;

"The IMF and World Bank continue to insist that all higher education institutions in a given country shift to contingent faculty as a condition for making loans to that country."

Another area the conference addressed was Academic Freedom. Again, a quote frames the discussion well;

"We tend to think of academic freedom for contingents as their 'freedom of speech'. The real threat, however, comes more from an administration's ability to simply not renew their employment." Craig Flanery, AAUP;

One thing I observed at COCAL is that administration policies and attitudes toward faculty vary greatly between institutions.

Some are relatively open, honestly pursuing the best in education for all concerned; others literally ignore their contingent faculty, playing hardball when faculty raise issues; some are pursuing corporate-type strategies with enthusiastic, even ideological zeal, while others seem to fumble along, integrating those strategies as they fit within patterns of cronyism and corrupt

practices while giving lip service to the needs of faculty and students.

The extent to which any or all of these apply to our local situation is, of course, a frequent subject of casual debate, but with little conclusion so far.

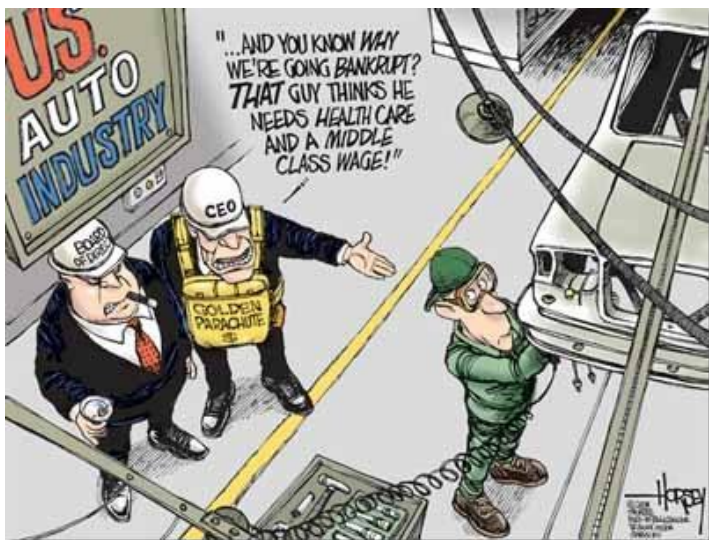
For me the COCAL conference was a very rich, enjoyable experience; I met many hardworking, engaged educators and built some lasting friendships. It reflected our life here in Peralta; the joy and satisfaction (and occasional tooth-gnashing) of working with students and colleagues, fragmentation of overworked faculty, freeway flyers working multiple districts, students wrestling with the stresses of today's life, and a student body that's less cohesive than either K-12 schools or 4-year colleges.

Peter Brown
Machine Technology Dept.
Laney College

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(If you would like to submit a letter to the PFT editor, email sara@pft1603.org. Please limit your letters & invites to 225 words or less & save them as Word documents, with a .doc file extension before attaching them to your email)

Perusing Faculty Doors



Negotiation Update: Contract to be extended until June, 2010

By Rick Greenspan, Chief Negotiator

In what can only be described as a "late breaking news story," the PFT and PCCD have decided to extend our current contract for an additional year, until June 2010.

The extension will guarantee that

1. The PFT will get a pass-through of any PCCD funded state COLA
2. planning for future sabbaticals can continue next year as it has in the past
3. part-time office hours and our part time health benefits programs will continue as they are currently running
4. parity funding will continue as long as the state provides funds for that purpose

Considering the unstable nature of state finances, the PFT Executive council felt that this was our best option. We will still be negotiating with the district in upcoming months in areas where we think we can reach a mutual agreement, but extending the overall contract will provide us with some stability in an upcoming era that can only be described as very, very unstable.

PFT

We are looking for more photos and cartoons that capture our interests, as faculty, or simply cause a laugh or smile.

Send a photo, cartoon, invite or letter to the *Peralta Teacher* editor, sara@pft1603.org; we will include it in the next edition.

Give us your suggestions on strengthening our contract & union

"Yes, I will!"