

From the President (cont.)

our colleges and work together to recommend solutions for Peralta. Many disciplines have already begun to discuss issues of consolidation, and the committee will hear from them. Ultimately, we are directed to make recommendations to the Chancellor regarding consolidation of programs.

Despite new challenges, PFT has notched some victories recently.

Before spring semester, PFT and the district completed an agreement on State Disability Insurance (SDI) deductions for part-time faculty, and we expect PT faculty to get the benefit soon. The deduction, overwhelmingly approved by part-timers in an election last spring, is a big, hard-fought win. Now when an accident or prolonged illness keeps a part-timer off the job, she will be able to access SDI. I am proud to say that Peralta is one of the first districts in the state to implement this benefit, a no-cost item to the district.

PFT also met with the district over winter break to begin clarifying the purpose and limits of fee-based classes. PFT and the district have agreed that non-credit classes are not to supplant traditional, regularly offered courses in a department's curriculum and that fee-based classes are not the panacea for saving shrinking offerings.

PFT has also raised concerns about fair payment and the rights of instructors teaching fee-based classes (e.g., participation in the district 50-50 healthcare program

and rehire pool, as well as office-hour compensation), and we'll continue to work with the district before going forward with a large fee-based program. Meanwhile, PFT understands that the district has told administrators that classes that had been or should be a regular part of a department's schedule cannot be converted to fee-based classes.

The other area the district and PFT conferred on over the break was negotiations. PFT and the district underwent interest-based bargaining training Feb. 9-10, and will soon sit down to formal contract negotiations. We've scheduled sessions through March, but we're cautiously hopeful that we can reach an agreement on a contract extension—which would keep the 2010-11 deal in place—before the current one expires June 30.

We'll form a negotiating team over the next several weeks. As you read through the *Peralta Teacher*, please examine the article from Chief Negotiator Rick Greenspan, who offers a more detailed update on PFT's talks with the district. We're deeply concerned we may be forced to deal with layoff notices; PFT will fight to protect members and prevent job loss, even as it works with the district to return Peralta to solvency.

—Debby Weintraub, President
pftpresident1603@yahoo.com
510.763.8820

LABOR STUDIES CLASSES STILL OPEN

With contract negotiations heating up among Peralta and its three major bargaining units, now is the time to enroll in late-start Labor Studies classes at Laney College.

Sign up!

LABST 12, Collective Bargaining (Wed. 6-9:15 p.m., 22733)
An excellent overview of a fundamental union right. —Prof. Karin Hart

LABST 13, Economics for Labor and Community Leadership (Th. 6-9:15 p.m., 22734) —Prof. Michael Eisenscher

LABST 15, Labor Leadership and Communications Skills (Tu. 6-9:15 p.m., 23884) —Prof. Hart

LABST 16, Rights and Discrimination in the Workplace (Mon. 6-9:15 p.m., 23885) —Profs. Hart and Rosalinda Palacios

For more information on the Laney College Labor Studies Program, contact Karin Hart at khart@peralta.edu or 510.464.3210 (X3210). And remember: Peralta faculty are eligible for tuition waivers—see your dean for details.

Class-cuts alert (cont.)

but that sections at each college will be eliminated until the college is projected to hit its target enrollment. Since Merritt had the most FTES (Full Time Equivalent Students) in fall 2010 (compared to COA and BCC), Merritt will have the most classes cut in fall 2011. In the box (at right) are the approximate number of sections that are targeted to be cut in fall 2011 at each college (compared to fall 2010).

Don't take these cuts sitting down! Tell your students

Number of sections to be cut for Fall 2011

COA . . . 37 Laney . . . 49

BCC . . . 57 Merritt . . . 95

TOTAL 238

what's going on in the state and at the district office. Speak up at board meetings, talk with friends and family, and keep yourself informed. Without an energetic response from faculty, the district will continue to balance the books on the backs of our part-time faculty and our students.

The PERALTA TEACHER

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

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From the President *Negotiations update*

This is a sad time for public education in California. Students' access to affordable public education is quickly diminishing as we witness the dismantling of the mandate of community colleges and the slow but steady trend of privatizing education. The cuts slated for community colleges will hurt everyone.



We'll lose services, classes, students, and colleagues. The union's job is to see that the cuts are equitable and that classes and student services are not the only or first place where cuts occur. The union and its members will also need to be active on the state level, since this is not simply a Peralta problem.

Many of us continue to call for cuts at the district office and for reprioritizing how PCCD funds are spent. But the hard truth is that without a fair tax system—one that would force the rich to pay their fair share—cuts alone can't save our colleges. All of us must take time over the next few weeks to contact our legislators and implore them to support Governor Brown's tax extension proposal and to work with their fellow legislators to make sure this happens.

We must take personal action. Start with friends, neighbors, and community groups and tell the truth about what's happening right before our eyes. Urge friends and family to support the tax extension proposal for the June ballot. Our moment to influence the representatives in the state legislature will pass quickly. A few moments of your time really can make a difference

Meanwhile, PFT members are working on the recently formed ad hoc committee on consolidation, made up primarily of faculty representatives (Academic Senate presidents and PFT elected officers) and a couple of administrators. The committee's charge is to seek innovative ways to restructure programs and use resources to best serve students while maintaining excellent services and class offerings. We'll need to think beyond our own personal needs, our departments, and

One-Year Contract Extension? Retirement Incentive? Interest-based Bargaining Begins

PFT and the district have been bargaining on multiple fronts since fall, and we're hoping that we'll soon have a tentative agreement for a one-year extension and a retirement incentive to bring back to the membership.

One-Year Contract Extension

This year, 2010-11, PFT agreed to "buy back" the increase in the district's contribution to our medical benefits. In return for this year's extension, we gave up sabbaticals, staff development funds, TRC stipends, etc. (To view the entire extension agreement, go to the PFT website, www.pft1603.org, and click on the "contract" button on the left side of the page.) Early last fall, the PFT Executive Council authorized a small bargaining team to make the same offer for 2011-12. Specifically, we offered to give back 50% of our contractual 2011-12 department chair release time in return for the extension (in addition to continuing the 2010-11 givebacks for another year). The offer is worth just under \$350,000, or the equivalent of about \$1200 for each contract faculty. That's on top of the equivalent of about \$1200 for each contract faculty member that we are giving up this year to pay for this year's increase in medical benefits.

Negotiations update (cont.)

Meanwhile, Governor Brown proposed a \$290 million cut in community college funding (it’s actually a \$400 million cut and a \$110 million increase in student fees). And this is his “best case scenario,” assuming that the voters approve extension of certain taxes in June. If the best-case scenario comes to pass, PFT feels that that our offer—along with expected retirements and other (nonnegotiable) cuts in instructional sections that the administration is planning—should be sufficient to get Peralta through the 11-12 fiscal year.

But the district is understandably worried about the “worst-case scenario,” which would begin to unfold should Brown’s ballot measures not pass. To address this contingency, the Executive Council also authorized the negotiating team to add “reopeners” to the extension agreement. Essentially, we are agreeing to discuss a further bailout, if state funding is cut even more drastically. No one knows how much state funding could be cut, but once we know, we have agreed to discuss such things as further department chair cuts, partial or full step/column cuts, or even “progressive” one-time salary cuts (*progressive* in the sense that people making the most money would contribute a higher percentage of their salary to keep Peralta afloat), depending on the economic conditions that the district faces in the fall.

The important thing to remember is that for any deal to take effect, it needs to be ratified by our membership. Last year’s extension agreement was ratified by over 95% of those voting. A 2011-12 extension and anything agreed upon in subsequent reopener discussions with the district would also require ratification by the membership. The final decision would be yours.

Retirement Incentive

The Executive Council has also authorized the negotiating team to discuss a variety of retirement incentives. Every time a contract faculty instructor retires, the district saves a great deal of money, and we have used a number of different incentive programs in the past to encourage contract faculty to retire. We are currently discussing a number of possible models for a 2010-11 retirement incentive.

Interest-based Bargaining

The final part of the bargaining puzzle is the renewal of our full contract, which—if the extension is approved—would expire June 2012. There are a number of important areas where PFT and district need to reach agreement prior to contract expiration. To facilitate reaching these agreements, PFT and the district participated this month in an intensive two-day interest-based bargaining workshop, led by Annie Song-Hill of the California State Mediation and Conciliation Service. Interest-based bargaining (IBB) is a more collaborative type of bargaining (compared with “positional bargaining”), which focuses on mutually beneficial solutions. Ms. Song-Hill will continue to work with us as a bargaining facilitator for the rest of this spring, and likely during 2011-12 as well, in order to help us complete the new three-year contract before the old one expires.

You may recall that the district unsheathed its proposal in the fall. You

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Part-time faculty update

How about a sliver of good news for starters? The board recently approved PFT’s resolution for institutionalizing State Disability Insurance (SDI) for the PT faculty. The district and the Employment Development Department must now implement the resolution. We’ll know when this becomes a reality when the 1.2% SDI deduction begins to appear on our paystubs.

With respect to the next few years, contract negotiations are scheduled to begin in February. My thanks to all of you for your participation in the various contract issues meetings I convened at most of the colleges, and for your recommendations for the negotiations. I received 60 responses with recommendations.

I would also like to alert you to the issue of Social Security offsets, which most people (part-time and full-time employees) become aware of only when they apply for Social Security income—and then it’s too late. If these individuals are subject to the WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision) or the GPO (Government Pension Offset), they will see a reduction in their expected Social Security income. This topic was addressed at two professional development workshops that I arranged last August and in January of this year. I urge PT faculty members in particular to take a look at the excellent information posted at ssfairness.com and join the movement to get the offsets repealed by Congress. There is time for us all to take steps now to avoid these offsets.

On the legislative front, I learned from FACCC’s Jan. 21 email report, *The Weekly*, that SB 114, which is being sponsored by Senator Leland Yee, “would require community college districts to determine the compensation of part-time

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Part-time Faculty update (cont.)

community college faculty using a salary schedule that places part-time faculty on comparable salary steps as full-time faculty with similar academic preparation and years of experience. The bill would require part-time faculty to be paid in a manner that mirrors the same relationship to the placement of full-time faculty on the schedule. SB 114 is sponsored by the California Federation of Teachers.”

Equal pay for equal work! This is, of course, delicious news. Please write to Senator Yee to thank him at Senator.Yee@senate.ca.gov or 455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14200 San Francisco, CA 94102. Also, let’s actively join the legislative movement to make this happen. I (maybe foolishly) think we can, and we should.

Finally, I’d like to urge you to examine your paystubs to ensure that the entries—e.g., health premium deductions, retirement deductions, district contributions, etc.—are correct. Contact the appropriate office immediately if you notice any discrepancies or errors: Nancy Pak for sick leave, David Betts in Human Resources for personnel matters, and Michelle Lenh in the payroll office for retirement errors. If you have trouble getting a timely response, please contact the PFT at 510.763-8820.

Remember also that the deadline for enrolling for healthcare coverage with the Benefits Office (benefits@peralta.edu) is Feb. 14, 2011.

Do stay in touch and wrest some nice moments from your work this semester.

—Cynthia Mahabir, Part-time Rep
cmlaney2003@yahoo.com
510.464.3185

Negotiations update (cont.)

may also recall that—as PFT has pointed out in this newsletter and elsewhere—the district has taken a strikingly aggressive stance going into this set of negotiations, offering nothing and pushing a long list of takeaways. Among the district’s goals are radical reductions in employee benefits, and drastic changes in working conditions. So even if the district fully embraces the tenets of IBB—which include the need to recognize an opponent’s interests—negotiations will be challenging, the stakes high.

As part of our contract bargaining process, PFT held campus and district-wide meetings last year to gather our members’ concerns about the contract. We expect to discuss these concerns and other issues at upcoming college and district-wide membership meetings as we begin the IBB process this spring.

Keep Informed

One final word: With the fluid situation in Sacramento and with bargaining going on here at Peralta on multiple levels, it’s important for everyone to stay informed on an ongoing basis. While the *Peralta Teacher* is one way of staying informed, it’s also important to stay in touch with your college PFT co-chairs, read PFT’s *e-Communiqué* and *Board Watch*, and attend our regular college and district membership meetings. Since everything that we bargain goes to the membership, we need an energetic, involved membership to make informed decisions on all these issues.

—Rick Greenspan, PFT Chief Negotiator
rickfromalameda@sbcglobal.net

District class-cuts alert

Fall 2011 Cuts Planned, 200+ Sections to Go

Peralta has decided to cut to the bone next fall. Based on a “best case” state cutback for 2011-12 of about 2.5%, the district has decided to double the 2.5% cut and take the entire hit in the fall 2011 schedule, rather than spread the cut over summer 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012. From their point of view, this gives them more “flexibility” to respond to budgetary conditions in spring 2012. That is, if they find out during the fall that they will need to cut more than 2.5%

over the entire year (should the governor’s propositions fail in June), they can slice the spring 2012 classes at that time. While that perspective may make sense to a number-cruncher, from the point of view of our students, our teachers, our communities, and our institutions, it means there will be 5% fewer classes available next fall compared to fall 2010.

In addition, the enrollment targets for fall 2011 are all approximately equal for BCC, COA, and Merritt in spite of current differences in enrollment. This means that the cuts will not be proportional to college enrollment,

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