

The

PERALTA TEACHER

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

FOR TEACHER
DIGNITY



March 8, 2007

vol. 49 no. 3

From the President

Greetings Faculty

By Debra Weintraub - Since the completion of the contract extension last November when we instituted the 25 step salary schedule, kept our current health benefits and increased new hires' and some part time faculty's salary, the PFT has been working on several issues. First, we are working with the District to ensure that part time faculty eligible for Step 6 on the salary schedule are moved as well as trying to ensure that part time faculty eligible to move to Step 7 on the salary schedule are identified. We have been expecting the 7th Step for part timers to be partially funded very soon. However, due to the District's archaic record keeping system, the moving of part time faculty to appropriate steps has been taking longer than we anticipated. Also, on the part time faculty front, the PFT has gone to every college and done at least one presentation on the new part time priority re-hire pool procedures and policy. The meetings have been mostly very well attended and lively discussions have ensued. The new classroom and counselor evaluation forms for part-time faculty are up on the District web site and will soon be up on the PFT website as well. By the end of the spring semester, the PFT is anticipating that 1/6 of the part time faculty will have been evaluated.

Second, we have been working on the issue of additional release time for department chairs at all four colleges. Many members of the unit feel that the amount of work required of department chairs necessitate more release time than is currently offered by our contract. And in the case of C.O.A., the issue is to obtain department chairs. Discussions with faculty from all four colleges resulted in the following resolution passed by our Executive Board on February 15.

Department Chair Release time will be based on a section driven formula (including summer and intersession). The total release time will start at 15.2 FTE for the four colleges, which would increase or decrease based on the District's growth. The amount of release time distributed to each college will be based on a percentage of the total number of sections offered during the preceding calendar year as calculated on the first day of the spring semester.

The resolution will guide the negotiating team in their negotiations with the District. Meetings among the representatives from the four colleges have not only been a wonderful collaboration of colleagues, demonstrated by a true desire to come to a fair and reasonable solution, but highly productive. In addition to the above resolution, we have developed a series of questions, an information request, for each college and the District to discover resources to help fund our proposal. Furthermore, we have asked that our proposal for more release time be officially sunshined (a negotiating term meaning brought out in the open so it can be discussed by both the union and the District) at the March 15 Board of Trustees' meeting.

What has been most exciting over the last few months is the increasing participation by members in union activities. Each Exec has been attended, not just by the elected representatives, but also by interested faculty who have concerns and want to share information with

the union or find ways to work together. Several faculty members have agreed to serve on committees on behalf of the PFT (Board of Trustee and District-Wide Committees). Others answered the call to join hands around the lake to create a PFT presence at Mayor Dellums' celebration of diversity in Oakland, while others (21!) agreed to put their name forward to be delegates to the California Federation of Teacher's Convention in Los Angeles this month. We have a faculty member working on a PFT day at an A's game. Our presentations and our membership meetings have been well attended and an exchange of ideas among members has developed. Our union is only as strong as we make it by actively participating in events, discussions, and meetings. Please keep us strong by speaking up and participating in any way you can. This Peralta Teacher highlights a few of our newly elected campus representatives. We thought it would be good for faculty to learn a little about the people who become active in the union, and hopefully inspire a few more of you to get involved.

In Unity,
Debby Weintraub
PFT President 1603

Part-time Faculty Updates:

By Cynthia Mahabir - Greetings for the spring! I saw the daffodils. That's my signal for a spell of delicious days outdoors. Here's the latest news on the Part-Time faculty front.

- **6th Step Increase:** The District recently informed us that payment of the 6th step salary increase will begin with our April '07 paychecks. The District said it would disburse the retroactive portion of the increase to faculty, in the form of a lump sum check, in April as well. The increase will range between \$3.00 - \$4.00 per hour for eligible faculty members, i.e. those of us who have completed 30 hours of service at Step 5. The increase will vary according to our current column status; the columns range from A through E. Those of us who have completed an additional 30 hours of service will be eligible for a 7th step salary increase, but since there isn't enough money to cover the full increase for the 7th step, a partial increase will be effected in the future. The

balance will be filled out when monies become available in the District's budget, perhaps next year.

- **Fee waivers:** We have been informed by the District that PT faculty members who take courses at any of the four Peralta colleges are eligible for fee waivers. A supervisor's signature is needed for them to be processed.
- **Part-Time Rehire Pool:** We've completed a round of presentations on the PT Rehire evaluation on all four campuses, and also conducted a professional development workshop on it on February 28, 2007. Many departments are currently engaged in preparations to begin rehire as well as regular faculty evaluations. Those of us who are eligible this semester for rehire evaluations (6 out of the last 10 semesters of Peralta service) need to keep in mind the following: it is expected that departments will be evaluating about 1/6 of their part-time faculty members this semester (and for the next five semesters), but because of a shortage of evaluators (a chronic problem), some departments may not be able to schedule rehire evaluations for all eligible part-time faculty members this semester.

In the meantime, here are a few questions we have received about the rehire evaluation.

Q.: If I have taught for 6 out of 10 semesters but am not teaching this semester, can I be evaluated for the rehire pool?

A.: No. But you can be evaluated if you teach next semester.

Q. Can I be evaluated during summer session for the rehire pool?

A. No. It must be during the spring or fall semester.

Q. Can the two classroom evaluators observe and evaluate an instructor at the same time?

A. There is no rule that prohibits this, but we strongly recommend consulting with the instructor and obtaining his/her consent before doing the evaluations this way.

Q. If two classroom evaluators observe an instructor at the same time, can they write a joint evaluation?

A. No. They must write separate evaluations.

Q. If all the items in Sections A and B of the classroom evaluation form are checked, does the instructor automatically receive a 'surpasses requirements' or 'exemplary' rating?

A. No. Section C – the 'justification' section – is crucial to the rating given.

Q. How can I prepare myself for an evaluation?

A. Get copies of the five evaluation forms from your dean or department chair– student questionnaire, classroom observation/evaluation, administrative evaluation, self-evaluation, and summary evaluation. Read each very carefully; meet with your classroom evaluators before the observation day and give them some background information about the class; and do a comprehensive self-evaluation.

Please e-mail your contact information to me at: cmlaney2003@yahoo.com, formally register as a PFT member if you have not yet done so (go to <http://www.pft1603.org/page2.html>), be well, and keep in touch.

Cynthia Mahabir
464-3185

Voices: The News on Josh Wolf

By Ann Whitehead... The December 11 2006 issue of the PERALTA TEACHER described the circumstances surrounding the imprisonment of Josh Wolf that began in August 2006. The following brings his plight up to date.

During February and March 2007 PBS's popular program FRONTLINE is airing a series labeled NEWSWAR in which the current status of American media is examined critically. Professor Lowell Bergman, UCB Graduate School of Journalism co-produced and narrated this noteworthy in-depth analysis of shield laws, journalists' rights and responsibilities, and the relationship of journalists to government officials.

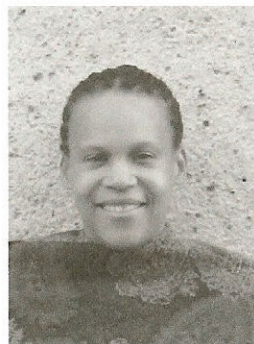
During the second (of four) episode Bergman interviews Wolf who has been held on contempt charges in Dublin's Federal prison longer than any American journalist in history. Interestingly, Chronicle staff writer, Bob Egelko has reported that Wolf's subpoena was approved by Attorney General Alberto

Gonzales consistent with "guidelines in cases against journalists as provided by the Justice Department". Thus far Wolf has been denied bail, denied a Thanksgiving furlough, and denied requests for a re-hearing.

On February 13, 2007 U. S. District Judge William Alsup referred the case of Josh Wolf to a Magistrate, Joseph Spero "in the interest of reaching a resolution satisfactory to both sides". By going to a Magistrate both parties must agree to let the case remain there---if either party complains then the case gets returned to the U. S. District Judge. As of this writing no results are known publicly. In addition to FRONTLINE Josh has been interviewed by Amy Goodman of Pacifica Network's DEMOCRACY NOW. Josh says his case shows the need for "a free media that's not encumbered by interference, that doesn't force journalists to act as agents of the state".

By clicking "donate" at the joshwolf.net website one can easily contribute to Josh's legal defense fund.

New Faces at the PFT



Teresa Williams was elected Campus Co-Chair for Merritt College last fall. She has been teaching within the District since 1995. She first started teaching part-time at the College of Alameda and later at Merritt, where she also started as a part-time instructor. Although Teresa has been full-time at Merritt since 2000, she doesn't forget what it is like to be a part-time instructor nor the misconceptions others may have about part-time instructors. Teresa spoke about racking up credit card debt, early in her teaching career, because she was literally paying for opportunities to teach and how common it is for part-timers to seek faculty positions at various colleges. She knows that

when part-timers struggle to piece together teaching assignments, their passion for teaching is guiding them to seek out numerous opportunities.

Teresa recognized the value of strong unions at a young age; both her parents were union members. Yet, her orientation to the PFT began when she was faced with the prospects of having to file a grievance to ensure that her own rights to advance in salary (by obtaining additional college credits), per the union contract, were not violated. The experience of working with the PFT Grievance Officer, Mark Greenside, to pursue a successful outcome, reinforced the importance of having all the information and the benefit of having someone to go to with a serious union issue. Since winning her grievance, Teresa has continued to enroll in college classes but not for the sole purpose of salary advancement; her interest stems from the desire to learn from others and to remember what it is like to be the student in someone else's classroom. Given Teresa's approach to the classroom, with its emphasis on gaining knowledge to inform future actions, it shouldn't be all that surprising that what Teresa enjoys most about her involvement as the Merritt Co-Chair is "knowing that faculty can bring problems to her and she can find solutions. By helping the faculty, I learn more about my rights too". Her commitment to an enlightened environment and an inclusive community demonstrates her savvy, yet unpretentious, ability to embrace various positions to better address potential problems.

Teresa observes, "a lot of faculty may think the union is only a place to go *when you have a problem*, but *the union is the place to go before you have a problem so you don't have one*." She gave examples of things faculty ought to know about their contract, which included: knowledge about what the full-time equivalent hours are for members of the faculty and "when you're asked to take an overload, know all your options." Teresa's early experience in working with Mark Greenside to bring her own grievance to a resolution, taught her the importance of knowing where you are on the salary schedule and why you are there. She suggested that faculty become aware of the equated hours it takes to advance down the steps and the process for moving across the salary columns with additional college units. As Teresa remarks, "don't wait for a union representative to tell you [of your rights] seek information out."

One of the areas, Teresa has already made significant contributions to the union is through her propensity to gather details, engage in research and report findings to move the contractual rights of full and part-time faculty forward in accordance with the PFT contract and board policies. She looks forward to sharing information to enable a greater understanding of the history behind current issues and the rights of faculty. She explains, "by knowing past cases we will know more about where we are heading and how to get there successfully." Undoubtedly, many will benefit from Teresa's dedication to union representation; it's one that realizes the many opportunities we have to learn from each other.



Patricia Dudley, the campus representative at the College of Alameda (COA), is not new to union work. As a college student in Buffalo, New York, Patricia and her friends supported unions by joining their picket lines, making protest signs, distributing flyers and other activities. After the birth of her son, she took a hiatus from union work. Still, it's hard to imagine that Patricia wasn't always speaking up on behalf of her colleagues.

When I asked Patricia to name at least one thing she felt individual faculty may like to know about being a PFT member, she replied that the union can provide assistance with a lot of the day to day administrative issues, such as getting paid in a timely manner without all the hassle. Faculty members can bring these problems to the union and the union will get involved and get a resolution. And, if you weren't familiar with how your union contract works and how one can best apply some of its benefits, Patricia suggested faculty would benefit from knowing about the leave banking program (Article 26, section T). She elaborated, when faculty take a banked leave, which they earned and saved while doing extra service, it is better than opting

to get paid for extra service. Banked leave is paid to the faulty in future dollars and earns retirement service credits as well. Getting paid for extra service as it is earned equates to less value because it is paid at 60% pro-rata.

Her responsibility to the union, as she defines it, "is making sure the faculty get a fair shake". She feels unions are necessary in an organization to "balance power" between the administration and all workers. Patricia is concerned that workers are losing the concepts that led to strong unions in this country. Many are not aware of the historical ways unions have improved lives. Since beginning her tenure as a campus representative, she has expressed her desire to change that trend by arranging more opportunities to learn about labor history. She is currently working with a PFT affiliate, California Federation of Teachers, to plan a speaker presentation during an upcoming staff development day.

Patricia has been with the District for 14 years. Nine of those years were as an instructor at Merritt College, including three years as a Department Chair. Since 2002 she has been the Health Services Coordinator at COA and, as if that isn't enough work, Patricia is currently the Chair of the College's Staff Development Committee and the Crisis Team. She is also a member of the College of Alameda's Safety Committee and the district-wide Safety Committee. In her relatively recent position, as an elected union representative, she feels like she "came back home".

Patricia looks forward to her tenure as a union representative.

PFT ALERT: The union has reached the necessary number of sick days needed to assist two faculty members. We are no longer accepting donations of sick days for the Catastrophic Leave Program.

The PFT thanks you for all your generosity.



PFT

CALENDAR:

STRS Presentation

March 13, 2007
District (333 E 8th St.)
3:30-4:30PM

Join the Labor Contingent* & Protest the Iraq War

March 18, 2007
Justin Herman Plaza, SF
12PM

** For a PFT T-SHIRT for Rally, Call 763-8820*

Executive Council Meetings

1st and 3rd Thursday (next: March 15, 2007)
500 E. 8th Street, Suite B
3:-5:00PM

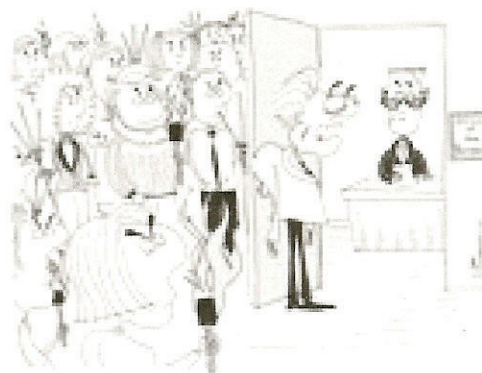
General Membership Meeting

April 25, 2007
Laney A-266
3:00-5PM

Call for Faculty Voices:

We want your voice to be heard, we then ask that you take some action to build a strong union:

- ✓ Become a member (fill out and submit the membership form on the last page of this newsletter)
- ✓ Attend a meeting
- ✓ Write a letter to *The Peralta Teacher* (Email, Send, or fax it to an address listed below and we will include it in the next edition of the *Peralta Teacher* in the "Faculty Voices" section)



"Some adjustments are necessary to see peace, too."