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PCCD Board Watch (11.27.18 ed.)

1 message

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The Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees held a boardroom retreat Nov. 27 to take up an unusual [censure resolution](#) brought by Bill Withrow against a fellow trustee, Nicky Gonzalez Yuen.

After hearing nearly an hour of spirited public comment, and following a series of impassioned speeches from the dais, the board voted 4-3 for a substitute motion calling for group mediation in lieu of the personal censure.

Meredith Brown, the board president, made the substitute motion—seconded by Gonzalez Yuen—following the withdrawal of the same motion by Student Trustee Aisha K.L. Jordan, who'd suggested the compromise a few minutes earlier.

Julina Bonilla and Karen Weinstein voted with Brown and Gonzalez Yuen. Opposing them were Withrow, the subject of a tough [San Francisco Chronicle](#) piece this week, Linda Handy, and Bill Riley, who lost his seat in the Nov. 6 election.

In the lead-up to the vote, [PFT President Jennifer Shanoski](#) suggested that the board might better spend its energy considering how to improve conditions at the colleges than settling scores—starting, for example, with fixing Laney's HVAC system.

[PFT Grievance Officer/COPE Chair Jeff Sanceri](#) admitted to feeling unsettled by a resolution that appeared designed to silence one of "the more consistent voices on the board who speaks directly to faculty and student" concerns.

And [PFT Diversity Committee Chair Kimberly King](#) expressed dismay that trustees had opted to "waste all our time with this spiteful resolution." The coordinator of Laney's Umoja program also decried the board's move to "turn this last meeting into a vengeful attack on a trustee who has been vocal in asking the very questions that are needed if we are to function properly as a district." The new board, featuring freshly elected Area 5 Trustee Cindi Reiss, takes over Dec. 11.

Among those speaking out were BCC prof Michel Bohbot; CoA political scientist Robert Brem; Laney faculty members Mallory Barkdull, Michael Eisenscher (ret.), Marla Leech, Donald Moore, Mark Rauzon, Meryl Siegal, and Chris Weidenbach; Merritt Early Childhood prof Elizabeth Crocker; 1021 President Richard Thoele; Sandra Weiss, Organizing Director for the California Federation of Teachers; Liz Ortega, Executive Director of the Alameda Labor Council; and new Oakland school board member Gary Yee.

Arguably the most gripping comments of the night came from the resolution's target himself, [Nicky Gonzalez Yuen](#). The De Anza political scientist and Boalt-trained lawyer coolly critiqued the case against him and made an unapologetic argument for the value of dissent and free speech.

The length of the censure debate meant the other agenda items, all informational, mostly went unaddressed. The formal approval of a potentially controversial recommendation by BRJ Associates was deftly delayed by Trustee Bonilla: PFT will be looking out for the latest restructuring proposal in weeks to come.

PFT looks forward to working with the new board.

In solidarity,

Jennifer Shanoski, President

Peralta Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1603

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