

Presidential POV

ELECTION WORK defined the fall term. PFT members came out in droves—knocking on doors in Modesto to flip a House seat from red to blue, phone banking for longtime ally Tony Thurmond, and promoting our own candidates and initiatives in the district.

Sisters and brothers, our hard work has paid off.

Cindi Reiss, PFT's candidate for Peralta's Board of Trustees in Area 5, defeated Bill Riley, who'd held the Oakland hills/Piedmont seat for two decades, by more than 40 points—an unprecedented margin of victory that testifies to the effectiveness of the union's efforts.

Tony Thurmond—champion of public education and labor—beat a billionaire-backed charter school executive to become the next State Superintendent of Education, Democrat Josh Harder outpolled an incumbent Republican to turn a long-red Modesto congressional district blue, and Peralta's parcel-tax extension and facilities bond passed overwhelmingly.

We didn't win every race, but we made strong showings even where we came up short. Corean Todd, running against 18-year incumbent Linda Handy in Area 3, finished less than five points back—despite the fact that Corean entered the race at the last possible moment and worked fulltime at an affordable housing nonprofit throughout the campaign.

In any case, we look forward to working with the new board to ensure that the district appropriately manages its money, including the \$8 million a year from the parcel tax, and the \$800 million in bond funds.



President Jennifer Shanoski (second from left) joins BoT candidates Corean Todd (left) and Cindi Reiss (center), Diversity Chair Kimberly King, and Grievance Officer Jeff Sanceri for some serious election-season fun. Reiss won the Area 5 seat by more than 40 points, first-time candidate Todd fell just five points shy in Area 3.

And while much of our time and energy focused on electoral politics this fall, PFT kept active with plenty of other activities, too.

Back in September, PFT held its first-ever Labor Day Picnic, the start of an annual celebration of working people in the greater Bay Area. Folks from the Oakland Educators' Association, Berkeley Federation of Teachers, Berkeley Council of Classified Employees, City College's AFT 2121, and the California Federation of Teachers joined PFT at Laney College for barbecue and all the fixings.

We've also continued to visit faculty and sign up new members. With a super-majority membership that hovers above 80%, we're proud of the outreach work that we've done in the face of recent attacks on labor at the national level.

We've also held a series of workshops this fall aimed at supporting faculty in a district that isn't always able to provide adequate assistance to its workers. Workshops have included New Member Orientations, Student Debt Relief,

Retirement Options, and Unemployment Support. We're always looking for feedback and ideas for new member outreach activities—so let us know if there's a workshop that you need and we could provide.

As the fall comes to an end and our new board gets to work, PFT is preparing for a contract campaign. The district, while continuing to hire consultants and ignoring its own hiring freezes, promotes the notion that we are a poor district. So the fight for improved wages—including part-time pay equity, continued benefits, and better working conditions—will be a hard one that will require us all to stand together.

We look forward to joining forces with all faculty and staff to ensure that PCCD employees are able to do the work we love in a safe, supportive environment with some freedom from the economic burdens that living here impose.

Jennifer Shanoski
President, PFT, AFT Local 1603



Peralta Federation of Teachers

500 E. Eighth Street, Suite B
Oakland, CA 94606
(510) 763-8820
union@pft1603.org

www.pft1603.org



OFFICERS:

Jennifer Shanoski, *President*
Tae-Soon Park, *Vice President*
Matthew M. Goldstein, *Secretary*
Rick Greenspan, *Treasurer*

CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVES

Joshua Boatright, *Berkeley City College*
Scott Hoshida, *Berkeley City College*
Maurice Jones, *College of Alameda*
Mary Shaughnessy, *College of Alameda*
Miriam Zamora-Kantor, *Laney College*
Ann McMurdo, *Laney College*
Hilary Altman, *Merritt College*
Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, *Merritt College*

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Jeff Sanceri, *COPE*
Matthew Silverberg, *CTE*
Kimberly R. King, *Diversity*
Francis Howard, *Part-time*

PAST PRESIDENT

Ed Jaramillo (RIP)

STAFF

Anna Roy, *Labor Representative*
Kayla Lewis, *Database Coordinator/
Communications Specialist*

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.

© Peralta Federation of Teachers 2018



Grievance REPORT

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer

SOMETIMES being PFT grievance officer is like walking through the landscape of a dystopian novel, where one looks through the smoky, ozone-filled air to see buildings in various states of disrepair, broken windows, and weeds sprouting from the concrete.

Metaphorically, of course. Ahem.

The grievances we're handling these days run the gamut, but they stem from the problems that we continue to encounter with college and district administrations that have a rather loose grasp of their contractual obligations to faculty.

Let's go through a short list, shall we?

1. We are currently fighting for back pay for faculty who were misclassified at one of the colleges.
2. My email announcement that part-timers check their base loads resulted in no less than 14 corrections (and counting—I'm still working on some of them!).
3. It took some time, but after some persistence, I was able to discover who the Faculty Evaluations Coordinator is at Merritt College (if you're reading this, hello!).
4. Our president, Jennifer Shanoski, unable to shake the grievance-filing bug (she served as GO under two previous presidents), has filed a facilities grievance to get our beleaguered district facilities department to do something about the pool at Laney, which is currently unsafe—both in the water and on the deck.
5. At our last membership meeting at Laney College, we had a wonderful turnout, despite the fact that faculty


had to wear heavy coats and gloves to combat the low temperatures in the room. Since this is a violation of Article 12, Section A (which states that the colleges have to abide by the standards set out by Cal/OSHA), and the room was far below the required 68-72 degrees, we filed a grievance.

There are definitely more grievances happening and being written (even as I write this!), though I don't think we have enough space to talk about them all. For instance, many of our distance education courses are overenrolled, in violation of the contract. There are cases of administrators mistreating faculty—whether through intimidation, bullying, or simply ignoring faculty questions and concerns.

And PFT continues to be concerned about the district's effective insistence that shared/participatory governance be cast aside in favor of, well, unilateral decision-making by managers/administration.

Sadly, while there are some bright spots in the district administration, we remain the arbiters of what is legal and what is illegal when it comes to the actions of management. PFT continues to work with newer administrators at the colleges as they adjust to their surroundings and struggle to learn how to respond to faculty grievances that might be easily solved with a glance at the contract (or Title 5, or Peralta's own board policies and administrative procedures).

This, despite the fact that administrators at both the colleges and district have the same access that you and I and everyone enjoy to Title 5, California Ed Code, district APs and BPs, and our contract.

As always, PFT will remain vigilant in ensuring the safety of faculty and students, while at the same time reminding the administration that it has to obey the law like everyone else. 

Diversity Committee Keeps on Moving

By **Kimberly King**

Diversity Chair

AS MARTIN Luther King, Jr., said, “We must learn to live together as brothers [*sic*—and sisters!] or we will all perish together as fools.”

PFT and the Diversity Committee teach Dr. King’s unity-building lesson daily, working hard to transform Peralta into the district our students deserve!

Last spring, the Diversity Committee led PFT members in the May Day/ International Workers Day march in downtown Oakland, standing up for the human rights of migrants and all workers. May also saw the DC celebrate Asian Pacific American History Month. Librarian YiPing Wang organized an exhibit at the Laney Library, “Herstory: The Legal History of Chinese American

Women,” curated by Chiu Chang. The show highlighted the oppression, struggles, and triumphs of Chinese American Women. Among the notables at the opening reception: Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and SF Public Defender Jeff Adachi.

In June, Peralta faculty, staff, and students marched in the San Francisco Pride Parade. Laney’s Mallory Barkdull (Engineering) put the DC together with the East Bay Resilience Contingent of the Oakland LGBTQ Center. As Diversity Chair, I worked with Mallory, along with Laney’s Nat Pyle (Sociology) and Christina Yanuaria (ESOL)—and Tammie Gilkerson, college president—to organize the contingent.

It was a fun and powerful show of unity by the Peralta Community with the LGBTQ community. Decked out in freshly printed PFT Diversity Committee

Pride Day t-shirts, faculty from each of the four colleges came with their children, partners, and friends, and we shared a wonderful day of camaraderie!

DC members also played a prominent role in the November election, working hard for our two PFT-endorsed candidates, fabulous and strong women of color who fight on behalf of their communities. Mission Valley College art history prof Cindi Reiss won an overwhelming, 44-point victory in the Area 5 race, taking down an 20-year incumbent, and Corean Todd made a strong showing but came up just a few points short in Area 3.

Thank you to all the PFT members who made a difference by volunteering in the campaigns! I welcome your ideas for activities moving forward—email me at: profkimberly@yahoo.com 



PFT at SF Pride (from left): Rebecca Bailey (Biology, Laney), Nat Pyle (Sociology, Laney), Mallory Barkdull (Engineering, Laney), Rachel Goodwin (DPS, COA), Christine Will (Math, Laney), and Suzan Tiemroth-Zavala (ESOL, Laney)

Negotiations NOTES

By Rick Greenspan

Chief Negotiator/Treasurer

AFTER MONTHS of breathless anticipation, the district finally presented the contract issues that it plans to “sunshine” in November to the board (and public).

But before you read about what it is asking from faculty, the first thing to remember is that the district is asking for all these things in return for—wait for it—*nothing*.

After taking back 1.5% in overall faculty salaries beginning with the August and September paychecks, and while sitting on a state apportionment COLA of 2.71%—part of a three-year “hold harmless” plan, thus not influenced by enrollment drops—the district has pled poverty at each session this fall and has offered nothing in the way of raises for faculty.

Here’s what the district is putting on the table and asking from faculty:

- ▶ **A new article for “professional responsibility,” which would include penalties (“consequences”) for faculty who do not:**

- meet monthly participatory governance service hours (that is, committee meetings).
- turn in syllabi, rosters, and grades to deans on time.
- meet minimum syllabus requirements.
- do enough regular SLO assessment work.
- use required “student success” software.

▶ **New department chair job description that would:**

- allow only fulltime, tenured faculty to run for department chair (no part-timers).
- require more intensive evaluation of chairs.
- make chairs orient new faculty.
- force chairs to hold monthly department meetings.
- schedule mandatory meetings in January and August for chairs to learn the ins and outs of “enrollment management” from administrators.

▶ **Special load limits for contract faculty:**

- maximum .6 load online.
- maximum .4 load dual enrollment.
- maximum .4 summer load.


▶ **Calendar**

- expand summer to eight weeks, which will allow two four-week sessions, or a single six-week session, or a single eight-week session, with various classes beginning and ending at different times during the summer.

▶ **Distance Education**

- increased scrutiny and evaluations of online classes (to improve “accountability and quality”).
- management will be able to *require* contract faculty to teach online (currently must be by mutual agreement).

Since all topics need to be “sunshined” to the public at two consecutive board meetings, we can’t begin negotiations on issues until January.

It goes without saying that it will take a united faculty to stand up to the administration during this process. We’ll need to work together to convince the administration, the public, and the board that an offer of *nothing* is totally unacceptable. When Peralta faculty return from winter break, it’s clear that we’ll need to ramp up our political activities to get the compensation increases we deserve. 

Meet John Holmes



PART-TIME
History instructor John Holmes worked hard to recruit new PFT members throughout the fall semester.

An experienced union activist before he began teaching at Merritt—he spent a quarter century with his printers local—John shared his passion for organizing and made a huge difference for PFT.

John’s vision includes helping Local 1603 to mobilize faculty, students, and other interested stakeholders “to fight for a better educational system for everyone, as well as better treatment for employees, in particular faculty who can’t even afford medical coverage.” We’re very fortunate to have John on our team.

Holidays, PFT-style

By Hilary Altman *Membership Engagement Chair*

AS THE HOLIDAYS APPROACH, many of us are drawn to service for people in marginalized communities. This year, PFT is coordinating with St. Vincent de Paul in Oakland to provide staffing for meals at its community center and to help gather donations of warm clothing.

To build connections with each other and the communities in which we work and live, PFT is partnering with Student Activities Committees at the four colleges, as well as at the district office, to place donation bins at various campus and DO locations. We will have an additional collection bin at the PFT offices.

PFT hopes to donate five full bins of warm clothes and to staff at least three meal services at St. Vincent de Paul’s Oakland Community Center this December. Katie Troy, Volunteer Programs Coordinator of St. Vincent de Paul, reported that weekday meal service days are difficult to fill. Beyond free meal services five days per week, St. Vincent de Paul also has a culinary training program for community members—with successful career placement for trainees. And they recently opened their winter shelter, too.

Knowing PFT members’ dedication to their communities, I have no doubt that we will meet our donation goals and find at least 30 volunteers to fill three shifts in December. If you’re interested in helping with this service project or others in the future, please contact: hilaryaltmanphd@gmail.com