

Presidential
POV

SINCE the March shutdown, PFT has been busy adjusting to the “new normal” and working on faculty issues remotely. Changes in the academic calendar, evaluation procedures, and instruction-delivery methods all occurred in the immediate wake of the shelter-in-place order from Alameda County.

PFT actively worked to be involved in these decisions and assist the district with the many moving parts, but we were mostly shut out—and therefore left with no recourse but to file an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge. But with the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) backlogged, we were held at bay through the spring term and into the summer.

Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud essentially refused during her brief stint as chancellor to work with PFT. Her abrupt resignation—she gave notice after less than a year in office—came as a shock. And while we admired the erstwhile chancellor’s fierce intelligence and energy, we were also relieved to have a shift in leadership, however disruptive. The Vice Chancellor of Finance, Carla Walter, stepped in as acting chancellor in July and has since advanced to interim. Under her steady leadership, a number of important issues have been addressed and resolved.

During summer 2020, the district unilaterally capped most classes at 40 and refused to compensate faculty for the time and labor required to convert face-to-face classes online, both moves in violation of Article 33. We tried to resolve these issues informally but were forced to file a grievance when it became obvious that class sizes wouldn’t be changed and that compensation, if given, would be tied to the “quality



PFT President Jennifer Shanoski was joined by new PCCCD Trustee Kevin Jenkins (California mask) and PFT Grievance Officer Jeff Sanceri (LA cap) at a fall rally for SEIU at Highland Hospital. PFT also walked the picket line with brothers and sisters from Teamsters Local 856 at their December strike at Eden Hospital in Castro Valley.

of the class” as judged by one Vice Chancellor. The two grievances were resolved with a payment of \$1000 going to all faculty who converted a course for fall 2020 and in-class support for faculty with classes of 35 or more. We also agreed to a real dialogue about class sizes for spring 2021, talks that ultimately led to a reduced class size of 32 for all online-only spring classes.

These were huge wins for faculty, who continue to work hard delivering excellent courses to students remotely. While the compensation doesn’t fully pay for the many hours faculty labored to get ready for a totally new teaching reality, the agreement demonstrates an acknowledgement of that work and of faculty’s commitment to students.

And in early November, after waiting for months, PERB issued a citation on the ULP. Every issue that PFT brought to PERB was upheld—that is, PERB decided in PFT’s favor on every count. Next we’ll have a mediated settlement conference and, if necessary, head to court. PFT was confident throughout this year that we’d prevail, and it’s satisfying to see PERB

agree with us by issuing the citation. We’re optimistic that a settlement will be reached so that we can turn the page in order to focus on other pressing concerns.

Looking forward, PFT is excited to welcome two new board members and insure that they’re empowered to do their good work by stopping the appointment of a special trustee. For years, we’ve heard faculty and staff lament the state of the district and wonder if getting “taken over” might improve conditions. Just ask our brothers and sisters in Oakland Unified if state control makes things better. And talk to your PFT representative about how you can help guarantee we maintain local control of our colleges.

Finally, we want to acknowledge that we’re only sending out the fall 2020 edition of the *Teacher* electronically. We hope to return to regular delivery soon; with a vaccine on the horizon, it seems possible that you might find a hardcopy *Teacher* in your campus mailbox next fall. Until then, be well and stay healthy.

Jennifer Shanoski
President, PFT, AFT Local 1603



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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.

PFT's Diversity Committee Launches Antiracist Subcommittee

By Francis Howard

Vice President

IN SPRING 2020, the PFT Diversity Committee formed the Diversity Subcommittee on Antiracism and Intersectionality (DSAI) in response to Chancellor Regina Stanback Stroud's remarks about racism at Peralta. The need for DSAI was made more pressing by the George Floyd lynching and the xenophobic treatment of a Laney student by a faculty member.

The committee began meeting weekly and established a cohesive group of faculty across the colleges. DSAI was founded to address conscious and unconscious biases through rich, meaningful self-work and facilitated dialogues to improve relationships with colleagues and students.


DSAI, undeterred by Stanback Stroud's surprise resignation, put out a survey in August. Eighty-five percent of respondents cited racism as the most pressing topic facing faculty. In response, DSAI sponsored well-attended antiracism presentations during fall flex days. The sessions provided safe spaces for those at all levels of understanding to begin working toward a more inclusive environment.

The success of the fall program led DSAI to recommend that the district engage the services of the Difficult Dialogues National Resource Center (DDNRC), the group that led the flex-day workshops. In recent weeks, the district office, in connection with the Office of Staff Development, has followed PFT's recommendation, and partnered with the union and the District Academic Senate to bring DDNRC to Peralta.



Brigid Dwyer

The DDNRC's Brigid Dwyer—an Oakland native, former Laney student, and current Associate Dean of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Princeton University—will work with the district in the months ahead to train the Peralta community in restorative practices and cultural competency. The emphasis of the training will be to address all forms of prejudice; the framework is meant for long-term, sustained growth and participation.

The Peralta community has reached a moment where its longstanding need to improve its culture intersects with the increasing willingness of its members to change. As we are all physically separated from one another during shelter-in-place, there is a growing desire within the community to connect with one another and to understand our roles in improving our culture and institution so we can better serve students. PFT is proud to be among the leaders of district efforts to push for positive change. 

Grievance REPORT

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer / COPE Chair

THERE HAVE BEEN a handful of grievances this fall, some spanning back to summer 2020. While it certainly is the case that living under pandemic conditions redefines our school year and even the meaning of seasons themselves, the position of grievance officer has no seasons.

Ever the grumbler, I should probably finish whining and describe the grievance types filed since we last met in the pages of *The Peralta Teacher*. They are generally of two kinds:

- (1) violations of the contract, District Administrative Procedures, or the State of California Education Code by our district or college administrations against individual faculty members; or
- (2) situations in which the district or college administration enacts or ignores existing policies in violation of the contract, District Administrative Procedures, or California Education Code.


The first is about solving problems for individuals or groups of faculty. The second is about the violations of the larger policies that govern our district, and figuring out how best to serve our faculty (and students) in the most equitable and fair way possible.

In her Presidential POV, Jennifer Shanoski speaks to the most notable of the larger grievances described above in No. 2. It was she, along with our negotiating team, who settled them, and they led to huge wins for faculty that deserve to be front and center. Compensation for transferring classes online, enrollment caps, and, perhaps the biggest win of all, the PERB ruling on PFT's Unfair Labor Practice filing against the district—sustained on all counts! But what am I saying? Read about it in President Shanoski's column!

On the smaller side, offenses described in No. 1 are usually issues around payment, mistreatment of faculty, and the general inability of management to follow the rules that we all agreed upon in the contract. I don't take it personally; my job in these cases is just to solve problems. If a faculty member is being evaluated in a way that violates the processes outlined in our Faculty

Evaluation Handbook, I speak to the dean. If a faculty member has not been paid for the better part of a year for services rendered, I also speak to the dean—or sometimes I'll take it all the way up to the president of the college.

Unless provoked, I find that the most effective way to address administrative mistakes is not through frustrated rants inserted into an official Step 1 grievance, but rather through an informal discussion that gets us to the root of the problem (administrative oversight), and allows space to make corrective suggestions based on the contract, APs, Ed Code, or the Faculty Evaluations Handbook.

So in sum, our negotiated contract means that faculty and administrators can be partners in both the education of our students and the working conditions that allow us, as faculty, to do our jobs. Getting paid on time, adherence to the processes outlined in the contract, and general respect for faculty and their work should be standard practice, without exception—and PFT is here to insure that administrative respect for faculty is unconditional. 



PART-TIMERS UNITE!

By John Holmes and
Karyn Panitch

PFT Part-time Representatives


CALLING PERALTA part-time faculty! Concerned about class cuts, cancellations, the downsizing of Peralta, and the transformation of our colleges into all-online institutions? Do you want your voices to be heard?

For many years, PFT's Part-time Committee has fought for the rights of part-time faculty.

What's going on now at Peralta? The triple blows of the pandemic, budget cuts, and the forced (but hopefully temporary) transformation of Peralta

into an all-online institution have had a devastating impact on part-timers, full-timers, all who work here, our students and their families—and, indeed, the whole East Bay community.

Through our union, we can act together on behalf of ourselves and the whole community. Through PFT's Part-time Committee, we can get our voices heard!

We'll hold regular Part-time Committee meetings throughout the spring. And we also plan to have a part-time committee meeting as part of our spring flex day. All are invited, so look for email announcements with Zoom info soon! 

COPE with it!

Election season is over... wait, is it? YES, it is!

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer / COPE Chair

BASELESS PROTESTS of fraud at the federal level notwithstanding, the votes have come in for our local races, and the people have spoken. Running a political campaign in the midst of a pandemic required not only tireless commitment to the issues and people that candidates sought to represent, but also a great deal of creativity and imagination to reach voters despite the constraints of this new world we live in. Locally, COPE—PFT’s Committee on Political Education—applauds all the candidates for their commitment to the betterment of our district, our cities, and our county.

For COPE specifically, let us start with our mild disappointments: PFT-endorsed candidate Jeff Heyman, former district employee and faculty advocate ran a valiant, grassroots campaign against longtime incumbent Bill Withrow for Area 1 PCCD Trustee, but came up short. Although his candidacy did not have the ending faculty wished for, I am sure that you will all join me in thanking him for seeking to represent faculty, and maintaining a level of integrity in this race that should be emulated by most, if not all, future candidates. We are disappointed at the result, but we are also proud of Jeff’s efforts and his


campaign, and we are proud to have endorsed him.


From Alameda, we travel into east Oakland, where Kevin Jenkins ran unopposed for Area 2 PCCD Trustee, and will take his seat in the spring semester after being sworn in December 2020. Trustee-elect Jenkins not only served as Vice Chair of the Peralta Community College District’s Bond Oversight Committee, he is also a former Peralta student himself! Even though he is a member of the new generation of Peralta Trustees, trustee-elect Jenkins brings a critical perspective on politics and education to the dais, as well as a lifetime of experience in the very region that he will be serving. We at COPE were happy to endorse his candidacy and believe our students and teachers will be served well by him for the next four years—and we hope even longer than that!

Take a trip on 580 west towards Berkeley, and we find the home base of our Area 6 PCCD Trustee, Dyana Delfin Polk. A graduate of UC Berkeley in Chicano/Latinx Studies, trustee-elect Delfin Polk not only brings with her an enviable academic record that includes a Master of Public Policy from Mills College, but also firsthand experience working in the field of youth violence prevention in the Bay Area. A community college graduate, she brings not only her professional expertise,

but also her personal educational experiences to the dais. With on-the-ground qualifications like these, it is no wonder that COPE voted to endorse Ms. Delfin Polk, and we look forward to her representing students and faculty as one of our two newest trustees!

Finally, let’s stay in Berkeley and travel west, to the neighborhood of Nicky Gonzalez-Yuen, our Area 4 PCCD Trustee. A PCCD Trustee since 2004, Gonzalez-Yuen has been a stalwart advocate for both faculty and students, often taking stands unpopular with the monied interests outside the district, and even administrators hostile towards faculty. His consistent support of teachers, counselors, librarians, and healthcare professionals throughout PCCD has become his calling card, and has much to do with his own occupation as a community college professor just south, at Foothill-De Anza Community College District. When not teaching or serving on our board, Trustee Gonzalez-Yuen spends his time organizing students and developing the political activists of tomorrow. No wonder COPE’s supported him in each of his runs for Area 4 PCCD Trustee!

Indeed, this year has been unpredictable, and at times unsafe. But perhaps one of the things that we can count on is that the future of the PCCD Board of Trustees is in safe and capable hands for at least the next four years! 



The union’s Executive Council meets first and third Thursdays 3-5 p.m. All members welcome!

Spotlight on Union Representative **Justin Hoffman**

Meet PFT’s newest rep, Justin Hoffman. Justin joined the faculty at Berkeley City College in 2013, and he now serves as strand lead for Mobile and Web Design within the Department of Multimedia Arts. “I am excited to represent the PFT at BCC,” said Justin, “and to collaborate and support all our part-time and full-time faculty members.” 