

UNION



NEWS

August 2005

GOOD NEWS ON THE SALARY FRONT!



Three Wishes!

. Step 15

. Raise

. Retro Check

see page 2!

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GOOD NEWS ON THE SALARY FRONT!

BY DENNIS SMITH AND ROBERT PERRONE

In a world wracked by conflict and any number of vagaries that can shake even the most secure among us, it is comforting to know that at least one thing remains a virtual constant—at the beginning of each academic year, Los Rios faculty can look forward to salary schedule improvements and a retroactive check. This year is no different. On August 3, District and Union representatives met to discuss the coming year and what we can look forward to, at least in terms of salaries.

After closing out the previous year's books and calculating the last bits of funding and expenses, the numbers look quite positive. In addition to the normal 4% step increase for those not yet at the top of their schedule classification, the overall salary schedules for all faculty will improve by an additional .92%. In addition, the new step 15 on Salary Schedules A-175 and A-185 will now be fully funded and represent a 2.17% percent step increase.

Please be reminded that last year the District front-loaded a two percent continuing salary adjustment for 2004-2005 that was paid throughout the last academic year and that the lump sum retroactive salary distribution is the remainder of the 2004-2005 funds provided for faculty compensation by our contractual revenue sharing formula. While salary schedule improvements represent additional new and on-going funds, the retroactive check, due to be paid on August 19, represents both new and on-going funds and one-time only funds (2.61% for everyone) from the previous year's budget. Thus, while overall continuing salary schedule improvements are either .92% or 3.09%, the retroactive check amounts to 3.53% or 5.7% of faculty salaries from July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DEAN MURAKAMI

I hope everyone enjoyed the summer. There have been a number of critical events that have happened over this time and I would like to share my thoughts about them with you and take a look into the future.

The rally on May 25th was extremely successful. I want to thank all of you who went and those that supported it in spirit. With about 14,000 or more at the State Capitol and 10,000 at the same time in Pershing Square in Los Angeles, it was one of the most significant labor rallies in California history. The coordinated effort by the unions, the advertising campaign, and the lobbying at the State Capitol, in which the LRCFT was integrally involved, greatly contributed to its success. Although I was invited to speak at the rally, I was unable to attend because the departure date of a planned vacation to South Africa was changed just two weeks before the 25th.

All of the elements that went into building the rally I believe worked together to bring the governor's poll numbers down and force him and the legislature to compromise on a budget that was signed July 7th. The budget is very favorable toward community colleges: an overall nine percent increase and a Prop 98 split of 10.42%; no student fee increases; and no shift of the state's STRS contribution to districts. This could not have happened without your support and the organized efforts of many public employee unions working together. I suspect that the governor would never have made a deal if his poll numbers had not been declining like Worldcom stock.

I was disappointed that the governor and the legislature didn't make a better effort to address the structural deficit in the budget. However, while we can take credit for convincing the governor and legislature to reach a budget agreement, we must maintain our focus, diligence, and cooperation, because I believe that the governor's goal is to prevent us from being able to make this type of effort in the future. The ballot initiative he supports, but is silent on publicly, the "protect

me from labor act," would make it very difficult for public employee unions to finance a campaign in the future, would silence our voice in the budget process, and significantly hamper all other political activities. By doing so, he could terminate Proposition 98, resolve the budget deficit by under-funding education, and seriously erode the wages and benefits of all public employees. The governor has not backed down in wanting to privatize STRS and PERS, and his ballot initiative, the "live within my means act," would give unprecedented budget-determining power to the governor and the minority party, currently the Republicans. These two initiatives alone should be enough to keep us energized and focused.

I am sure most of you have either heard or read about the disaffiliation of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Teamsters, and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) from the AFL-CIO. Why the leadership forced such a split is puzzling, in light of the fact that most local labor organizations, such as the central labor councils, worked cooperatively with each other. Those that have split want the emphasis on organizing, while the AFL-CIO leadership wants to concentrate on political lobbying. Of course, both are needed to have an effective union, but it seems to me that emotion and ego trumped a reasonable compromise. The uncertainty is whether the national union leaders will force a change in the current good working relationship of the state and local central labor councils, such as the Sacramento Central Labor Council (SCLC). The SCLC has been the primary labor organization in Sacramento that has coordinated the political and social activities of the different unions affiliated with it. In addition, a number of SEIU members have leadership positions in the SCLC. We hope that this will not change so that a united labor voice will remain strong in Sacramento and all the other local central labor councils. My initial conversations with Bill Camp, executive secretary of the SCLC, on these issues seems to be that all of the local union leaders want to main-

tain our solidarity and work together despite the split at the national level. However, the current AFL-CIO constitution does not allow non-affiliated unions to be in the local central labor councils, let alone in leadership positions. Will there be a movement to change the constitution, ignore it, or force locals to comply? If SEIU, Teamsters, and UFCW remain in the local and state labor councils, should other non-AFL-CIO unions, such as the CTA, have the right to be on the councils? Time will tell, but the national union leadership must confer and learn from the rank-and-file that all unions can work together cooperatively. Otherwise, unions will see a continued erosion of their relevance in the US workforce and national politics.

I would like to congratulate Barbara Davis-Lyman for her appointment to the Board of Governors. Along with Dennis Smith as the new President of FACCC, we are all very proud to have these state level faculty leaders from the Los Rios district.

Lastly, we have two new college Presidents, a new Vice President of Student Services at SCC, and a number of new deans this school year. The LRCFT Executive Board and I are looking forward to working with them and establishing the same healthy professional relationship that we have maintained in Los Rios.

I hope all goes well this semester; find the time to discuss the upcoming special election, and encourage everyone to go to the polls. ■

CHIEF NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

By DENNIS SMITH

Another three-year contract has been negotiated, ratified, signed, and published by the LRCFT and LRCCD negotiating teams. The details of the negotiated agreements were published at the end of last semester and are online at www.lrcft.org along with the new contract and some interesting comments from the negotiating team members. A video and a PowerPoint presentation describing the changes are also available on request. Call your LRCFT College President or the LRCFT office at 448-2452 if you or your department would like a copy or would like to schedule a new contract presentation.

Though the official negotiations for a successor three-year contract are now concluded, the issues that need labor management dialog and understanding are for all practical purposes continuous. This summer, the negotiating teams have continued to meet. We are serious about the ongoing improvement of our relationships and the effectiveness of our negotiations processes. Both the LRCCD and the LRCFT teams have sought out and participated in facilitated process debriefing, assessment, and planning activities, both individually and then together. We have celebrated our successes, we have learned from our experiences, and we are now moving into dialog and negotiation of seven substantive issues that the teams agreed to engage between contract cycles.

The LRCFT has begun its preparation for these issues and has assigned team leaders to facilitate the work of the seven issue-groups. We meet with the LRCCD team in August to clarify our assumptions, values, and processing ground rules for all of the groups. The large teams plan to meet again in October and then as needed in the spring 2006 semester. The names of the LRCFT team leaders for each group and some brief background on the issue follows.

Alternative Calendar —Chuck Van Patten, CRC and Annette Barfield, SCC

The benefits to students (access, retention, and success) of a 16-week semester have been

realized in many community college districts in California and have been in discussion by representatives of LRCFT and the LRCCD for several years. This semester, we will reconvene a study group to examine an alternative calendar. The study group will meet in consultation with the Academic Senate on academic and professional matters and will also move to involve other constituency groups in an attempt to anticipate the workload impact of a calendar change. The organization and discussions begin in August and must be completed by January 15, 2006. The purpose of this work group would be to provide a recommendation (if any) regarding an alternative schedule for 2007 – 2008 or beyond.

Computer use and privacy —Lanny Hertzberg, CRC and Dean Murakami, ARC

The current LRCCD Policies and Regulations regarding computer use and privacy were adopted on an interim basis in the late 1980s. Repeatedly, the LRCFT has requested a review of these policies, particularly where they address expectations of privacy for computer files in faculty offices. The LRCFT, LRCCD, and other interested constituents will meet no later than October 15, 2005, to share interests and options as they relate to board policies and administrative regulations guiding computer use and privacy. The outcome will be shared with district leaders in Chancellor's Cabinet.

Performance Review Study committee —Robert Perrone, LRCFT and Annette Barfield, SCC

This group is being convened by the LRCCD and LRCFT at the request of the LRCCD. The committee is charged with exploring and recommending alternate models for performance review to be considered for future contract negotiations. The committee will then develop a white paper identifying strengths and weaknesses of alternate models.

The committee may create subcommittees, comprised of equal numbers of unit members and LRCCD representatives, to include

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

members more knowledgeable of particular assigned performance review issues and may delegate its charges to such subcommittees. The Performance Review Study Committee shall convene no later than 120 days after ratification of the 2005 – 2008 contract.

Post-retirement Healthcare —Donna Nacey, SCC and Dennis Smith, SCC

In Los Rios, the post-retirement health care currently is a defined contribution for medical insurance for the retired employee only. The contribution does not come out of the LRCFT salary formula and the unfunded liability for this modest contribution is in the millions of dollars. The LRCFT wants to investigate the costs of certain improvements to post retirement health care in order to assess the possibility of a proposal to the membership to fund those costs out of our existing revenue sharing salary formulas.

Commencing in the spring semester of 2006, interested constituents, including the Insurance Review Committee, will form a group to examine issues related to health care for eligible retirees. Such issues shall include, but are not limited to: funding requirements, funding source, vesting requirements, pre-funding period, adequacy of current contribution amounts, coverage for dental insurance, and coverage for spouses or domestic partners covered by the District's health insurance at the time of retirement. The committee will also explore expansion of options under IRC Section 125. The work of the group will be completed and a report will be issued prior to January 2007. Implementation of any potential plan will not need the Insurance Review Committee's or any other union's approval.

Student Grievance and Complaint Processes review —Reona James, CRC and KC Boylan, FLC

The Senate Union Joint Issues Committee (SUJIC) first researched this issue in 2002 and found, "...due process policy or regulation does not exist for employees and should be in place, including notification of

an investigation and the right to union representation during investigations that might lead to discipline." Based upon spring 2005 negotiations, the LRCFT and LRCCD will form a committee no later than September 1, 2005 to review current student grievance and complaint processes (at all colleges) as they relate to faculty concerns. The committee will then explore interests and create options that will provide for faculty notification in a timely manner. Recommendations will be brought forth to their respective bargaining teams no later than June 1, 2006.

Technical and Vocational Faculty Salary —Dean Murakami, ARC and Robert Perrone, LRCFT

Based upon spring 2005 negotiations, the LRCFT and the LRCCD agree to develop a committee no later than October 1, 2005, to review the initial salary placement challenges of tech/voc faculty. Options to be reviewed should include potential credit for CSUS course in community college teaching (12 units), "journey level" status (if defined in another manner), etc. Recommendations shall be brought forth for negotiation with LRCFT no later than April 1, 2006, for potential implementation in fall 2007.

Workload Study Committee —Diana Hicks, ARC and Steve Ruis, ARC

The LRCCD/LRCFT Workload Study Committee was last convened to address some issues specific to counseling faculty, faculty coordinators, and classroom faculty teaching in the lab/shop/clinic mode. The committee was already scheduled to convene after complete implementation of the .75 lab/lecture equivalency to determine the extent and scope of any additional workload equity issues remaining for specific lab/shop/clinic mode classes. The LRCCD and LRCFT also agreed to have the committee examine the faculty workload issues for faculty in those programs where external standards are imposed. The committee will report its findings by May 1st of each year or the timeline established by the committee.

A new channel for member input into negotiations

As the work of each of these seven issues groups unfolds over the coming year, the LRCFT team is interested in getting maximum input to the dialog from our faculty members. As always, anyone of you is invited to communicate directly with me, your LRCFT College president, or any other union official about issues that concern you. However, a Blackboard-based discussion area is being contemplated for each of the seven topics described above. Look for an e-mail announcement soon describing the use of this new communication option for issues in negotiations. ■

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AT:**
www.lrcft.org

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FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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Inspired by the accomplishments of the US labor movement, the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) was founded in 1978 to represent faculty throughout the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD). Since then, LRCFT has been a leader in the struggle for faculty labor rights in the Sacramento area and the education rights of all Californians.

FOR THE CONTRACT TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS 2005-08 [CLICK HERE](#)

2005 ANNUAL UNION PICNIC!

The 2005 Annual Picnic was an event to be remembered. While kids of all ages participated in three-legged races, sack races, and other competitions, faculty were relaxing and socializing in the Beer Garden, on picnic blankets, and at picnic tables. The old fashioned picnic theme was wildly fun! Hope to see you and your family/friends/colleagues next spring!



KC BOYLAN, IMPRESSIVELY TAPPING THE KEG



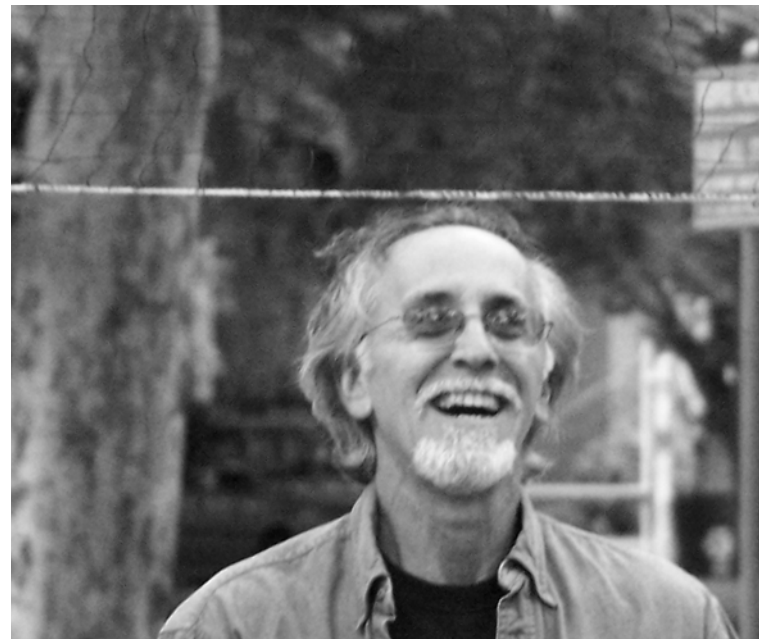
SOPHIA WAXMAN AND HER MAMA, READY FOR RACING!



THE THREE-LEGGED RACE: KIDS VS ADULTS



LISA DANNER, BEER GARDEN



ROBERT PERRONE, VOLLEYBALL MATCH

HIDING BEHIND ANONYMITY

By ROBERT PERRONE

Consider yourself lucky if you have not received any one of a series of anonymous letters from a group that refers to itself as “Academicians for Institutional Integrity.” Over the course of the last two years, this group has written anonymous (in the sense that its members individually refuse to identify themselves) letters to the campus community generally, and on occasion, to individual faculty members, attacking the District, Sacramento City College, certain academic areas at SCC and individual SCC faculty members. While I recognize that anonymity might be called for in certain circumstances, for example, if objective conditions were so dangerous as to make exercising freedom of speech a perilous activity, we are not there yet, even though at times the federal government appears intent on getting us there by using the “war on terror,” etc. as an excuse to abridge our civil rights. What I am trying to say is, these anonymous letter writers have no reason to remain anonymous, unless, of course, they merely want to attack people.

From time to time, these anonymous letters do address issues that have a ring of truth and that have been raised by other Los Rios employees, albeit by people who have chosen to be more open and above board and not hide behind anonymity.

The anonymous letter writers (I shall refer to them as ALW, rather than AII, since they seem to be thoroughly lacking in integrity) recently have focused their diatribes on individual faculty members in the Business area of SCC.

To understand these ALW, to the extent that people who hide behind anonymity can be understood, I did a little research. Some of the letters sent by ALW have come with attachments of articles from a conservative Web site, frontpagemag.com, a site sponsored by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, whose titular head, as noted by the ALW in their March 2, 2005 letter, is former leftist turned rightist, David Horowitz. The ALW have also included articles from an organization called Students for Academic Freedom,

an empty creation of David Horowitz’s and one comprised of very few students. Articles on frontpagemag.com especially target Arab intellectuals and their supporters and Middle Eastern countries generally, except Israel, on which is heaped praise for being an oasis of democracy. In the guise of attacking “political correctness,” Horowitz, via articles appearing on frontpagemag.com, promotes his own brand of conservative political correctness. Finally, they reference the Eagle Forum, the home of that redoubtable anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly, who has taken credit for single-handedly defeating the Equal Rights Amendment. Visiting the EF Web site, one can read a plethora of immigrant- and gay-bashing articles and learn that virtually all the evils of the modern world can be laid at the feet of fatherless families.

Among the several articles attached to letters from the ALW are rants on feminism found on the frontpagemag.com Web site. These pieces are authored by people like Michael Tremoglie, an ex-Philadelphia police officer who has denied the existence of racial profiling in large urban police departments; Mike Adams, a professor of criminology at the University of North Carolina—Wilmington, who has advocated abolishing tenure (something the ALW also have suggested, where, in a letter dated February 7, 2005, they write, “The governor may be on to something by getting rid of tenure” and “Merit pay and no tenure is an idea that has to be considered....” and “We must fairly reevaluate the outdated and anachronistic practice [sic] of tenure”); Christina Hoff Sommers, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute; and Tammy Bruce, a “reporter” on FoxNews and a former officer of the National Organization of Women, whose main claim to fame seems to be the novelty of a former feminist attacking feminism. The ALW also seem to believe that Rush Limbaugh is someone on whom they should rely for expert opinion on the issue of feminism, as when they write in their February 7, 2005 missive, “As Rush Limbaugh...[has] described feminazis [sic] man-hating assaults evidence a disdain for men....”

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



HIDING BEHIND ANONYMITY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

But attacking feminism is a distant second place to their main purpose, for the ALW have positioned themselves as the champions of African American male faculty and students. Their letters repeatedly inform the reader of the institutional racism that they claim is pervasive in Los Rios and how African American males particularly have been victimized. Of all their letters, not once do we see any mention that racism, whether pervasive or subtle, has had any impact on African American or Latina females. In fact, the ALW have claimed, tacitly and explicitly, in more than one of their letters, that “white middle-age+ women of SCC” are the source of racism, without providing a shred of evidence for these assertions.

The ALW are full of, among other things, contradictory messages. For example, as noted above, at the same time that they cite someone who denies the existence of racial profiling in large urban police departments, the ALW repeatedly remind us of how African American males are targeted for racial discrimination. One very obvious form of that discrimination is—racial profiling.

The ALW rail on endlessly about institutional racism at SCC, as if there was a great wall between SCC and society at large. With virtually the same pen stroke, these folks threaten to use the legal system, i.e. the courts, grand jury, EEOC, etc. to right the wrongs they reference. In other words, they would use the same legal system that has interned nearly one million African Americans in prisons, that’s one out of eight inmates on the planet, which has done more to set back the advancement of African Americans, particularly males, than Los Rios, SCC or any other target they take aim at combined. They would depend on the plantation owner to rid us of the stench of that very same plantation.

“We will be collecting students’ remarks from leftist professors and keep [sic] track of them.” (March 2, 2005 letter)

Well, so much for academic freedom. If the

ALW don’t like what you’re saying, if what you are saying doesn’t conform to their brand of political correctness, woe unto you.

“This letter represents our continuing dialogue to make positive changes to an institution....” (May 5, 2005 letter)

The ALW need to consult a dictionary. There they would find the definition of “dialogue,” to wit, “A conversation between two or more people.” (The American Heritage Desk Dictionary, 1981) How is it possible to have a conversation with people who refuse to speak with you, preferring to hide behind a cloak of anonymity? These folks don’t want a dialogue—they want a diatribe.

*“I wish whoever is perpetuating this stuff would sit down and speak with me.”
—Bill Nunally, Retired Faculty*

“The black male Chair of a department in the SCC Business Department has been fired after 35 years of distinguished part-time (a disgrace in itself) service to our College and District.” (May 5, 2005 letter)

Here, the ALW are referring to Bill Nunally, a former Real Estate Adjunct Professor at SCC. Without Mr. Nunally’s permission, the ALW would like us to believe that they are his defenders. In their rush to “defend” Mr. Nunally, they have ended up patronizing him. As he pointed out in a conversation with me on June 22, “I can defend myself; I don’t need them to defend me.” And he added, “I wish whoever is perpetuating this stuff would sit down and speak with me.” The ALW feel Mr. Nunally needs defending because they claim in more than one of their letters that Mr. Nunally was fired. However, according to Mr. Nunally, “I retired for medical reasons. I got to where I felt that I was cheating the students, so I could not go on, because I did not want to short change them.” I asked him whether he had ever

wanted to be a full-time faculty member and whether he saw part-time teaching as “a disgrace.” “No,” he said, “I was where I wanted to be; I had a darn good career.” Finally, he pointed out that, contrary to what the ALW have written, his career at SCC was closer to 25 years and not the 35 the ALW claim. While this may seem like a minor detail, it underscores one salient fact—getting their facts straight does not seem to be a strength of the ALW.

“Highlighting an abhorrent institutional racist practice and then doing nothing to change it evidences little more than a lack of moral integrity, backbone, and true conviction.” (February 7, 2005 letter)

That’s a quote from one of the letters distributed by this group. This illustrates, for me, their worst offense (and they are guilty of many)—their utter hypocrisy, underscored by that quote which appears in their letter of February 7, 2005.

For the ALW are fond of “highlighting an abhorrent institutional racist practice,” as any of their letters will attest, and then “doing nothing to change it.” What else can this evidence but, as they themselves write, “little more than a lack of moral integrity, backbone, and true conviction”?

Finally, by lodging overblown, exaggerated claims from the sidelines; by hurling insults from dark recesses, the ALW, despite all their speechifying about racism, do a grave disservice to the need for a serious discussion of racism in Los Rios, thereby diminishing the chances that such a dialogue will ever take place.

They remind me of cockroaches—whenever the lights are turned on, in this case, the light of scrutiny—they scurry back to their dark recesses. ■

FREEDING “ACADEMIC FREEDOM” FROM GOVERNMENT

BY BARBARA MCKENNA AND VIRGINIA KELLY

The AFT has expressed concerns about a statement issued by higher education organizations in response to the conservative-sponsored Academic Bill of Rights now making the rounds in state legislatures. The new statement, which the American Council on Education and others released June 23, is called “Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities.” The AFT contends that it has the unfortunate effect of tacitly affirming the notion that local or federal government can interfere in academic matters.

In contrast, the AFT and its activists have taken the position that politicians and government officials should stay out of curriculum development and teaching on campus and avoid legislating “intellectual diversity” under any guise. They have asserted this view, with considerable credibility, at the state and federal level ever since the California-based Center for the Study of Popular Culture started pushing the Academic Bill of Rights (ABoR) in 2003.

ABoR is model legislation that dictates how institutions can encourage a variety of political and religious beliefs in their hiring, curriculum and classroom management practices. A version of it is included in House Bill 609, which is proposed as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and 26 other higher education organizations issued their own statement challenging the language of ABoR. Their statement generally affirms traditional academic principles, asserting, for example, that intellectual diversity is a matter to be defined and protected by educators on campus and that all ideas in the political spectrum do not need to be given equal weight in achieving educational goals.

The AFT is concerned that the ACE statement, however, will be viewed as alternative ABoR legislation. AFT Vice President Bill Scheuerman, who heads the 28,000-member AFT local, the United University Professions at the State University of New York, points out that promulgation of the ACE statement hands ABoR proponents the victory of “compromise” and, in their view, puts them a step closer to ensuring that the language stays in the final reauthorized Higher Education Act with some semblance of a blessing from the higher education community.

In fact, the day the statement was distributed, Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio), who chairs the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, declared in his own release that ACE’s “consensus language” would be

included when the committee takes up the Higher Education Act this summer. That release quotes David Horowitz, the founder of Center for the Study of Popular Culture and author of ABoR, who says that the ACE statement is an admission on the part of colleges and universities that exclusion and harassment of conservatives on campus does exist.

“We favor getting rid of the provision altogether as a bad precedent for federal intrusion into academic decision-making,” says Scheuerman, who is also an AAUP member who disagrees with AAUP’s support of the statement.

“The federal government should not be getting into this business,” says Larry Gold, AFT higher education director. “The passage of any federal law would give a hunting license to conservative legislators to hold biased hearings around the country.”

The AFT will continue to work at convincing legislators as well as educators that the government should keep out of academic matters. “When it comes to academic freedom,” Scheuerman says, “the AFT will not compromise.” ■

THE NEW CONTRACT—WHAT’S IN IT FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

BY ROBERT PERRONE

On July 26, District and Union negotiating teams signed the 2005-2008 contract. The document contains some important changes that will be of interest to adjunct faculty particularly. While this will not be an exhaustive treatment of those changes, I will highlight the more important ones.

- The contract now covers faculty during the summer sessions.
- Although there are some sections of the contract that do not apply during summer (see Article 3I), what is significant for adjunct faculty is that hiring preference will be honored. That means some welcome predictability.
- Paid sick leave, to those adjunct faculty who have accrued leave time, will now be available during summer sessions.
- In addition to paid sick leave, adjunct faculty will also be eligible for paid bereavement, personal necessity, quarantine and jury duty leave during the regular semester. (See Article 9, Sections 9.3 through 9.12 for a discussion of the various paid leaves and the eligibility criteria.)
- The adjunct office hour program will not be available during the summer.
- Adjunct faculty will be eligible to work up to 1.15 FTE during any one academic year, although not more than .60 FTE during any one semester.
- Bumping language is now included in the contract (See Article 4, Section 4.8)
- Adjunct faculty who have taught at least 16 of 20 semesters at the same college and who have taught a course at a consistent time and/or location for four consecutive semesters may now request a written explanation if their assignment is changed.
- Critical illness leave is now available to adjunct faculty.

LRCFT LINKS

[HTTP://WWW.LRCFT.ORG/LINKST2.HTML](http://www.lrcft.org/linkst2.html)

By BILL MILLER

Ready to Dive In?

The web is a vast repository of information: some of it interesting, some of it useful and some of it even true. If you search for the keywords "Labor Union" in Google, it returns more than 16 million possibilities (more than 32 million for Yahoo). What I've found to be most useful is to find a site that can organize these millions of possibilities.

The "Links" page on the LRCFT web site is a great resource for getting in touch with your inner activist. It was while I was looking through the links on this page that I found the information on the inaugural column¹ in this series about a statewide database of union contracts available principally to administrators (and not necessarily to the unions themselves) that can help administrators "defend [their] positions."²

That was just the tip of the iceberg. The links on the LRCFT "Links" page are broken down into several categories including "Labor Links", "Higher Education" and "California Government". When over half of the LRCFT budget goes towards union affiliations for the AFL-CIO, AFT and CFT,³ it's nice to visit the web sites of these organizations to see where this money goes.

Within "Labor Links", the first site listed is the site for the AFL-CIO.⁴ This site has information on issues such as:

- Jobs, Wages and the Global Economy
- Don't Privatize Social Security
- Paying the Price at Wal-Mart
- Membership Benefits
- Corporate Watch

Membership benefits include discounts on cell phones, car rentals, computers and much more.⁵ Also, there is a AFL-CIO-endorsed credit card that offers comparable rebates to the best other credit cards

I have found and promises (among other things) that all customer service representatives are in the U. S.

The AFT web site⁶ has a section specifically for "Higher Education"⁷ that addresses AFT's work on various bills before Congress. One of these bills includes the Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR), a conservative-backed attempt to do away with the so-called liberal bias that leaves conservative students "feeling discriminated against on the basis of their political affiliation".⁸ Using this site to delve deeper, I then searched for "Academic Bill of Rights" in Yahoo. In ABOR, it states

- "No faculty shall be hired or fired or denied promotion or tenure on the basis of his or her political or religious beliefs."
- "Curricula and reading lists in the humanities and social sciences should reflect *the uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge* (my emphasis) in these areas by providing students with dissenting sources and viewpoints where appropriate."⁹



The first of these statements describes a political protection that can be seen as opening the door to requiring that people with conservative viewpoints are to be hired for academic positions to balance the debate on political issues. The second statement is just plain scary to me.

Now onto a not-so-obvious source of information in which union members might be interested. The last site listed on the "Labor Links" page is the Department of Labor Web site.¹⁰ What I found there: although the federal minimum wage is currently set at \$5.15 an hour, in American Samoa the minimum wage is set by a *special industry committee* and stands at \$2.86/hour for all employees of the hotel industry while employees of the publishing industry make \$3.63/hour.¹¹ Using this as a jumping off point, I searched for "American Samoa unions" in Yahoo and found that union membership is "low" (no exact figures) and that "6 out of 10 American Samoa residents were living below the poverty line, according to the 1990 U.S. Census."¹² Why doesn't the federal minimum wage apply to a U. S. territory that has such poverty?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

¹ November 2004 Union News, p. 6.

² <http://www.helmsolutionsgroup.com/cbdatabase/success1.htm>

³ Los Rios College Federation of Teachers Proposed Tentative Budget For July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. In this budget approximately \$459,000 out of \$830,000 goes to affiliations.

⁴ <http://www.aflcio.org/>, accessed 08/09/05

⁵ <http://www.aft.org/aftplus/financial/creditcard.htm>, accessed 08/09/05

⁶ <http://www.aft.org/>, accessed 08/09/05

⁷ http://www.aft.org/higher_ed/index.htm, accessed 08/09/05

⁸ <http://studentsforacademicfreedom.org/archive/2005/August/DHvMattsonDebate080505.htm>, accessed 08/09/05

⁹ <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/abor.html>, accessed 08/09/05

¹⁰ <http://www.dol.gov/>, accessed 08/08/05

¹¹ <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/americanSamoa/ASminwage.htm>, accessed 08/08/05

¹² <http://www.house.gov/faleomavaega/speeches/minwghrg.html>, accessed 08/08/05

A SALUTE TO LABOR DAY AND AL RODDA

By DEAN MURAKAMI

Another Labor Day will be coming soon. It seems to be one of those holidays to which we give little thought and take for granted. For many of us it is a much appreciated day off early in the semester that helps us transition from the quiet days of summer to the chaos of another fall semester. It is the reality check or wakeup call that the semester has really started!

While I hope that you take a moment to understand and appreciate the important contributions the LRCFT has made in improving the wages, benefits and working conditions of Los Rios faculty, I also want to urge you to consider the contributions of Al Rodda to this district and to the state of California.

Al Rodda is an alumnus of Sacramento City College who became a State Senator from 1968 – 1980. He then became a Los Rios Board of Trustees member from 1983 – 1992. Previously, under the Winton Act (1964), K-12 school districts and community colleges could not make binding agreements with unions. The only thing unions could do was to meet and confer with the district and make their best case for changes; the school board would then make whatever improvements in wages, benefits, and working conditions it would deem necessary. Thus, while faculty could ask for improvements, and the district might listen, faculty desires might have little bearing on the district's policy decisions. With all authority in management's hands, faculty gains had to rely solely on the good will of that same management.

As a California State Senator in 1975, Al Rodda introduced Senate Bill 160, the Educational Employment Relations Act, which allowed K-12 teachers and community college faculty to choose their own bargaining representatives and required the districts to honor those choices by recognizing the unions as the exclusive collective bargaining agents. This historic legislation became known as the Rodda Act. It provided a real purpose for faculty to organize into a union; negotiate at a more equal level for wages, benefits, and working conditions; required

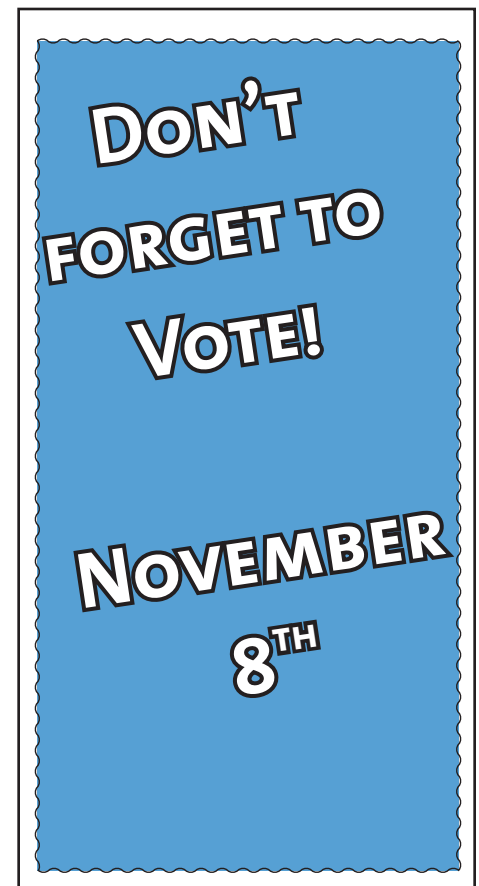
faculty to take personal responsibility in negotiations; and, if successful, their efforts would be rewarded with a strong contract. In 1976, the Rodda Act established the Public Employment Relations Board to administer the actual law.

In a passionate and turbulent period in 1977-78, the Los Rios faculty had to decide whether they would be affiliated with the California Teachers Association (CTA) or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Faculty in Davies Hall at American River College took the lead in advocating for AFT. One of their major concerns was that the CTA used its professional staff for negotiating contracts, and it had a predominantly K-12 perspective that did not necessarily coincide with the specific issues of Los Rios faculty. The AFT was seen as an organization that allowed for more local autonomy and provided the tools for rank and file faculty members to be able to negotiate and enforce their contract themselves. As a result, in 1978 the AFT won the election in which the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers was certified as the representative and bargaining agent for Los Rios faculty. Since then, Los Rios faculty themselves have been the primary negotiators of our contract, and our experience and ability in negotiations has improved each time, leading to significant gains by faculty.

I think it is easy to take for granted the wages, benefits, and working conditions our contract provides. I too, am guilty of this, even though I have sweated and toiled during many past negotiations. Keep in mind that there are still some school districts in California that have not yet achieved collective bargaining status; others that are completely ineffectual in collective bargaining, have a poor contract, and have extremely negative relationships with management. Luckily, that is not the case in Los Rios. In addition, I would like you to note that there are still 15 states in the United States that prohibit collective bargaining for K-12 teachers and community college faculty.

Are we fortunate in Los Rios? Do we have a reason to celebrate and appreciate Labor

Day? Absolutely! So, my small request to all of you is that this Labor Day, please take a moment and give a nod to the 30th anniversary of the Rodda Act, only the 30th year that faculty in California have had the right to collectively bargain a contract. In addition, especially give a heartfelt thanks to Al Rodda, a Sacramento City College alumnus, former member of the Los Rios Board of Trustees, and past State Senator who was friendly to education and labor. Al Rodda's legacy has allowed Los Rios and the LRCFT to be where we are today and to build toward the future. For the LRCFT Executive Board, I give my best to Al Rodda and all of you this Labor Day. ■



LABOR LINKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

More locally, the Department of Labor web site also reports the minimum wage state-by-state. California's minimum wage is set to \$6.75/hour. I assumed that this would be the highest of any state, especially looking at our housing prices. No, there are several states with higher minimum wages than California: Oregon (\$7.25/hour), Washington (\$7.35/hour), Alaska (\$7.15/hour), Vermont (\$7.00/hour), Connecticut (\$7.10/hour) and, as of 2006, Washington D.C. (\$7.00/hour). San Francisco, however, takes the cake by setting its own minimum wage at \$8.50/hour.

There are so many more sites worth investigating on the Links page of the LRCFT web site. This is *still* the tip of the iceberg. ■

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

NOVEMBER 8TH

**THE CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF
TEACHERS AND THE ALLIANCE FOR A
BETTER CALIFORNIA RECOMMEND:**

**NO ON GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER'S
SPECIAL INTEREST AGENDA**

- No on Prop. 74: "Punish New Teachers Act"
- No on Prop. 75: "Paycheck Deception"
- No on Prop. 76: "Education and Health Services Cuts Act"
- No on Prop. 78: Industry-Sponsored Prescription Drug Act

**YES FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS &
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

- Yes on Prop. 79: "Cheaper Prescription Drugs for Californians Act"
- Yes on Prop. 80: The "Affordable Electricity and Preventing Blackouts Act."