

**aft** Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

# Perspective

Volume 43, Number 1, November 2011



## Old school, new media

Matthew Goldstein likes old fashioned journalism, but will utilize any new communications medium if it gets the union's message across to members and public.

**page 3**

er 10, Association of Community and Continuing Education  
 ber 16, Northern California Town Hall  
 Oakland, Elihu M. Hall Building  
 San Jose, Fairmont H  
 ber 17- Community College League of California –  
 Sacramento Convention  
 Sacramento

## “Student Success:” setup for failure?

The “Student Success” task force is wrapping up its work, which means it's time for faculty to weigh in on its recommendations.

**page 5**



## Sharon Hendrickson for CalSTRS board

L.A. Community College instructor Sharon Hendrickson is running for a seat on the CalSTRS board. Vote for her before November 30 so that you have an advocate.

**page 7**

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# “We are the 99%”

## Why CFT supports the Occupy Wall Street movement

**Page 4**



## Taking the lead

Carl Friedlander, CFT Community College Council President

# Student success, public employee pensions, Wall Street and the for-profits

There are plenty of interesting questions to think and talk about these days in the world of community college faculty unions. Here is my top three:

- What do we think of the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force? Which deserve our support? Which warrant our opposition? What modifications should we be urging?
- What shape will “pension reform” take? Who will drive it—the Governor, the Joint Legislative Committee, the voters through a ballot initiative? How can we best influence the outcome?
- What do Occupy Wall St. and its progeny have to do with community colleges?

### Student success task force recommendations: faculty input, more time needed

Faculty are of many minds about the specific recommendations that have emerged from the Task Force created by the State Chancellor’s Office after being mandated by SB 1143 (Liu) (see article page 5). But one thing is clear: faculty participation is key.

Had SB 1143 been passed and signed in its initial form (instituting a “performance based funding” or “PBF” mechanism in the California community colleges), our system would likely now be at war with itself. The push for PBF by outside “experts” like Nancy Shulock, the L.A. Chamber, and the Campaign for College Opportunity would have generated strife and distrust. Studying experience in other states and systems is valuable, but the fact

that something is alleged to have worked elsewhere is no guarantee that it will work here. “Reforms” viewed by “insiders” as being forcibly imposed by “outsiders” are doomed to fail. The recent history of ACCJC’s SLO push in the California community colleges and of No Child Left Behind in America’s public K-12 schools should be caution enough.

By blocking the early versions of SB 1143 and instead creating a Task Force which included some of our brightest and most engaged faculty (identified by the ASCCC leadership), the system kept the “experts” from running amok and the Task Force from going off the rails.

Now, faculty across the state should weigh in; if this takes more time than SB 1143 allotted, the timeframe should be extended. There are some very impractical proposals in the report that will collapse in and of themselves—either because funding is not available or because technology is not the miraculous cost-saving, staff-replacing savior that some Task Force “outside” members imagine it to be. Instead of focusing on these, faculty should turn their attention to those recommendations that could actually be implemented but need to be improved.

Finally, we need to keep reminding everybody that adequate faculty staffing – including a significant expansion of the fulltime faculty ranks – is essential to improving student success.

### Whither pension reform?

Changes to public pensions in California are coming. We must ensure that defined benefit systems are preserved, but they can’t be preserved “as is” or with only minor tweaks (like

### “Reforms” viewed by “insiders” as being forcibly imposed by “outsiders” are doomed to fail.

the elimination of “air time”). We should support a reasonable cap on pensionable salary, real steps to address CalSTRS’ long term funding challenges, and other changes. And right now, the most important thing that each of us can do to ensure a level-headed discussion of these issues on the CalSTRS board is to make sure our colleagues cast their votes for Sharon Hendricks for the community college seat on the CalSTRS board before November 30.

### Community Colleges and Occupy Wall Street

All of us are thrilled to witness and participate in the outpouring of progressive and youthful energy that the Occupy Wall Street movement has tapped

into and unleashed. It gives us greater hope that we can begin to change the tax structure of California by passing a progressive tax initiative in November 2012, and thus begin to restore funding for community colleges and other public services.

We need to explain to the public that Wall Street – through publicly traded companies and private equity – owns sleazy for-profit colleges that take advantage of almost two million students to earn outrageous profits by collecting over \$30 billion in Pell grants and student loans.

The fight against Wall Street must, in part, be a fight to defend and fund public higher education. **CCC**

## MARK YOUR 2011-2012 CALENDAR

December 3	Community College Council, Hilton Oakland Airport
January 10, 2012	Deadline for high school seniors to submit CFT scholarship applications
January 21	CFT Executive Council, CFT office, Burbank
February 4	CFT Committees, Hilton Oakland Airport
February 9 – 10	CFT Leadership Conference, Crowne Plaza SFO, Burlingame
February 17	Constitutional amendments due for CFT Convention
April 13 – 15	CFT Convention, Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

## Perspective

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

The CFT represents over 120,000 educational employees working at every level of education in California. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California’s students.

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**Cover:** San Diego City College professor Jim Miller reads CFT statement of solidarity with Occupy Wall Street to crowd at Occupy San Diego rally.

FRED LONIDIER PHOTO

More CFT news: [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)

## Peralta's Matthew Goldstein

## Building the union by communicating with members

You might expect an English teacher to value good communication. But when the Peralta Federation of Teachers put Matthew Goldstein to work as a part time communications director a few years ago, the local wanted him to do more than issue grammatically-correct leaflets. With the support of then-President Debra Weintraub and other active members of the local, Goldstein helped to bring the union into the era of new media.

Today the union sends out a twice-monthly electronic newsletter by email to faculty at the four campuses of the Peralta Community College District. It issues a periodic electronic "Board Watch" as well, helping members keep track of decisions made at past meetings of the Board of Trustees, and prepare for coming ones.

"We already had a paper newsletter we put out twice a semester," Goldstein explains, "which we would supplement with special bulletins during contract campaigns. We still do that. But now we take advantage of electronic media, including twitter as well as email. We've revamped our website, using the CFT/AFT template to provide back-end support. Basically, we've addressed the new media climate, using it to inform members, especially new members, about the issues we face."

**Trading places**

In the election of local officers last July, Goldstein and Weintraub traded places. He became president, while she became communications director.

**"Changing the board helped us," he emphasizes, "but that doesn't mean we're in lock step. While trustees listen more attentively to our concerns, especially as president now it's my job to remind them."**

"It's a little different being president," he says, "since each day's emergency tends to absorb

our attention." But the e-newsletter archive is evidence that the union continues to concentrate on key questions. One hot question is the recent tendency in the district to hire consultants, while cutting jobs, especially for part time faculty.

The latest e-newsletter noted: "Among the agenda items before the board tonight are four that together authorize laddling out over half a million dollars to consultants, including \$84.5K to Bob Barr for 'professional institutional effectiveness services'; \$90K to Jim Grivich for helping Peralta address ACCJC concerns; \$69K to George Kozitza for various Laney-management issues; and \$280K to employment lawyer Larry Frierson for advising the district HR office. All this cash comes from the general fund, and might well have been used to save about 100 classes and 50 part-timers' jobs."

To help members understand the context, it noted that funds from the state had been slashed. The number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) for which it compensates the district will fall from 19,500 in 2010-11 to 18,200 in 2011-12, on top of 2000 FTES cut last year. And the newsletter presented the alternative: "Little can be done to slow the destruction of public education in California without a fair, progressive tax system," it pointed out, urging Peralta full-time faculty in the meantime to help save part time jobs by foregoing extra-service assignments.

**Alternative media**

The PFT e-newsletters are just the latest in a long series of efforts by Goldstein to find alternative media capable of promoting progressive issues. While getting his doctorate from the University of Texas, he helped put out "an underground lefty newspaper" called Sub-Text, he recalls.



Matthew Goldstein makes sure his members can contact him every way possible.

After he got his PhD, he worked for Bay Area dot coms, "getting paid fantastic sums, doing basic technical writing for four or five startups that promptly failed." Outside work, he contributed columns for another "dot-com lefty mag" put out by the "Wobblies."

The Industrial Workers of the World, nicknamed "Wobblies," was a radical union in the era just prior to and after World War One. It opposed war, and sought to organize all workers into "one big union." Today some young people have rediscovered that labor history and tradition, and use it to inspire their "fellow workers" to organize in Starbucks coffee houses, recycling centers and movie theaters. "These days the Wobblies are part of the youth culture," he says, "one that romanticizes and pays homage to the 1930s."

The IWW wasn't Goldstein's first union experience, however. After getting a master's degree in world and comparative literature from San Francisco State University, he studied post-colonial literature at UT in Austin, which he calls a "liberal oasis surrounded by the rest of Texas." At UT he wrote position papers for the Graduate Student Union, which affiliated with the Communications Workers of America.

Then he accompanied his partner, later his wife, to San Diego, where she studied at

the University of California. He got another job as a graduate student employee, and was swept up in the strikes and organizing drives of that era, which eventually forced the UC administration to recognize and bargain with the Association of Graduate Student Employees.

"We were part of the United Auto Workers," Goldstein recalls, "and I met very experienced UAW members on our picket lines. They really helped us. We were somewhat theoretically inclined—we'd heard about labor and capital, but what we needed was practical experience. They taught us organizing skills — sometimes just how to set up a line or hold a sign."

**Big fan of journalism**

Journalism stayed in Goldstein's blood, though. "I'm a big fan of journalism," he says. Just after college, before graduate school, he went to work at the *Valley Times*, a part of the *Contra Costa Times* newspaper empire of Dean Leshner, one of the most anti-union employers in California. The paper put him on the sports desk, but because he was the new kid, he spent most of his time covering high school games.

While Leshner's extreme conservatism and union-hostility bothered him, the main reason he left the paper and went to graduate school was his concern that the job had no real prospects.

Several years later, degrees in hand, Goldstein got a job at Laney College, one of the Peralta campuses, as a classified employee in the public information office, doing community outreach. His first union in Peralta was the Service Employees. He walked precincts and did phone-banking to support the union's political campaigns.

Then he became an adjunct instructor for two semesters, finally getting a permanent position in 2006. "I got involved in the PFT as soon as I was hired," Goldstein recalls, "even before I got tenure." His political experience proved useful in the union's subsequent campaigns to replace two board members it felt were more interested in making real estate deals for district property than working to meet the needs of students and faculty.

"Changing the board helped us," he emphasizes, "but that doesn't mean we're in lock step. While trustees listen more attentively to our concerns, especially as president now it's my job to remind them."

**Worries about part-timers**

As a former part timer and adjunct himself, Goldstein worries about the way the district relies so heavily on them, in an unfair way. "The number of full time faculty is at an all-time low here,"

Continued on page 6

# CFT backs Occupy Wall Street

For several years the CFT has been championing progressive tax policies to address state revenue shortfalls. We have announced our intent to go to the state ballot box with a proposal to boost income tax rates on the rich in November 2012 to fund public education and services. We have been gaining traction with our membership, the public, and a growing list of coalition partners, who recognize that the growing gap between the very rich and the rest of us has been unbalancing our society.

But the attention paid to these issues due to CFT efforts was nothing like what is now happening in the wake of the Occupy Wall Street movement. After thirty years in which the public political narrative has been dominated by anti-tax, anti-government, anti-union messages, the game is changing. For weeks it has been difficult to open a daily newspaper or turn on the ten o'clock news or go to your favorite news website without finding a story or seeing a picture about “the 1%” and “the 99%.” For the first time in decades, income and wealth inequality is a major concern of the news media, of kitchen

table conversations, and even politicians.

## Modest credit

A modest amount of credit can be given to Barack Obama, for coming back around to a 2008 campaign theme he pushed briefly in late 2010 but then let lie dormant until a couple months ago: his call to boost tax rates on millionaires and billionaires in order to fund public services.

But that wasn't the game changer. Of far greater consequence was a message sent out by an obscure Canadian media-critique magazine, *Adbusters*,

calling for people to show up on Wall Street and occupy it near the end of summer. Oddly enough, that's what happened. Not an occupation of the magnitude of Tahrir Square, or in the streets of Madison, Wisconsin, earlier this year, although the lessons of both those events clearly played a role in setting up what quickly spread from New York to cities across the United States.

Occupy Wall Street is thus far a rather limited example of direct action, if compared with historical precedents like the wave of factory occupations in the United States in 1937 following the seizure by automobile workers of the GM Fisher Body Plant in Flint, Michigan—the event that led to unionization of the auto industry. But Occupy Wall Street has endured, with hundreds of people organizing themselves to sleep, eat, debate, demonstrate, and learn together outside in a quasi-public space, Zuccotti Park, in New York for six weeks as of this writing.

The numbers have swelled to thousands for demonstrations and to defend the square against a threatened eviction, much like the flexible size of CFT's March for California's Future last year as it snaked through the central valley from Bakersfield to Sacramento over 48 days. More importantly, Occupy Wall Street sparked similar occupations/demonstrations throughout the United States. Better than one hundred fifty ongoing occupations have sprung up and kept going.

In the process, Occupy Wall Street has changed what we talk about, frightened bankers, stockbrokers and hedge fund managers, and reinvigorated labor and community activists hungry for good news in a recession that should have created a progressive movement but hadn't until now.

## What do they want?

CFT endorsed Occupy Wall Street, as have many labor organizations. That's because the occupiers, of varying opinions on some issues, are nonetheless clear that the economy and the government have not been working for you and me—the 99%—for some time now. They



Jim Miller of San Diego City College, AFT Local 1931, participates in Occupy San Diego.

FRED LONIDER PHOTO

Occupy Wall Street has changed what we talk about, frightened bankers, stockbrokers and hedge fund managers, and reinvigorated labor and community activists hungry for good news in a recession that should have created a progressive movement but hadn't until now.

are clear that teachers and other public employees did not crash the economy with their salaries or work rules or pensions—Wall Street did, with its toxic financial derivatives and predatory loan practices. They are clear that as income and wealth has accumulated in the top 1% over the past few decades, and tax rates have been reduced on that same tiny slice of the population, our schools, transportation and public health systems, and public safety agencies have been pushed into steep decline.

The Occupy movement has projected those ideas into public discussion in a big way. As CFT president Josh Pechthalt observed, “The women and men who are participating in Occupy Wall Street have given voice to the suffering and economic uncertainty felt by millions of Americans. Educators are proud to stand in solidarity with these principles and this important movement.”

Over the past few weeks CFT members have joined in the Occupy events in San Diego,

Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco. During the recent CFT Council of Classified Employees conference, a dozen members accompanied San Diego City College professor Jim Miller to Occupy San Diego. They presented the occupiers with a donation of several hundred dollars collected at the conference, and Miller read the CFT endorsement statement to an enthusiastic reception by the crowd.

Occupiers have reciprocated, coming out, for instance, to support San Francisco educators protesting an education “reform” conference headlined by Jeb Bush and Rupert Murdoch on October 13.

It remains to be seen where the Occupy movement will go. But even if it goes no further than where it is, it will have made an historic contribution to raising consciousness about the real problems facing this country. **ccc**

By Fred Glass

## California Federation of Teachers endorses a movement

“The California Federation of Teachers endorses the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement. Occupy Wall Street, and its local variations, represent the legitimate response of the 99% of us adversely affected by growing wealth and income inequality in America. One percent of the population now owns close to 40% of the country's wealth. Each year, the richest one percent of the population takes in a quarter of the nation's income, representing a doubling of the one percent's share over the past twenty years. During this time the wealthy received massive tax cuts, both in California and at the federal level, a major cause of public budget shortfalls that hurt students, make our streets less safe, and harm the health of children and seniors.

“Instead of investing its newfound wealth in productive enterprises in the United States, the top 1% moved it offshore or into financial speculation, which ultimately crashed the economy. The 1% also took large amounts of this money and poured it into a public relations effort to blame teachers and other public servants for the economic problems the 1% created.

“Occupy Wall Street redirects the attention of the public to the actual causes of the economic crash and recession and to the parties responsible. The California Federation of Teachers embraces the call of Occupy Wall Street to raise taxes on the rich, to reregulate the banks, and to enact a financial speculation tax. We encourage our members to participate in the OWS actions in their cities. These actions will help restore public budgets for schools and other vital services, and set our state and our country back on a road to democracy and prosperity.”

October 14, 2011

## Recipe for failure?

# “Student success” task force threatens mission of community colleges

Economic collapse and three years of deteriorating state budgets brought drastic cuts to higher education, and the Legislature commanded the California Community Colleges to do better. Following decimating cuts to student services, the Legislature threatened, for 2011-12, to cut still deeper by withholding an additional \$100 million from the system to be doled out to districts that showed improvement in student success, primarily defined in terms of completion rates. It sounded crazy, but community colleges have often been asked to do more with less.

This time, the system deflected the knife of additional budget cuts with the promise that its Student Success Task Force, mandated under SB 1143, should be given the opportunity to come up with a student success plan. This bill, introduced by Senator Carol Liu (D-Pasadena), threatened to fund community colleges based on the number of students who “succeeded,” rather than on the basis of the number of students served.

Despite the focus on “success,” nowhere in SB 1143, or in the work of the Task Force that followed the bill, appears a clear definition of “success.” And that has been problematic all along.

Effective advocacy nearly killed the bill, but the author worked with the System Office to resurrect it as a mandate to study student success in the community colleges.

To this end, the State Chancellor and California Community College Board of Governors were empowered to form the task force, and a diverse group of twenty representatives was assembled. The Academic Senate was granted four faculty seats that joined slots allocated to district chancellors and other administrators, members of the Board of Governors, and local trustees to represent the system. In addition, the group included community and workforce representatives as well as several analysts, both supportive and critical, who have written about community colleges in recent years. The State Chancellor attended as an ex-officio member, and Senator Liu also sent a representative in her place as a Task Force member. Various Chancellor’s Office staff attended Task Force meetings in an advisory capacity.

### “Experts”

The Task Force has been meeting monthly since January in its effort to prepare a report due to the Legislature by March

**As this process plays out, it is essential that faculty review the document and voice their opinions. Implementation of the proposal in its present form will have a significant impact on the nature of our community colleges. Open access and our students’ freedom to engage in an exploration of their interests and abilities are at stake.**

2012. The first six months were spent hearing from student success “experts” from around the country. Most of these addressed a topic mandated under SB 1143: the outcomes-based funding that had been the motivation of the original bill.

A brainstorming retreat in July outlined the basic framework of the proposal, and the August meeting formulated a point-by-point list of its components. Each component consisted of a recommendation; a list of legislative, regulatory, or structural actions that would be required for implementation; and a description of how the goal would be achieved. From the outset, it was clear that while the group might be able to settle on a set of recommendations, it would never be able to end debate over how they were to be implemented.

To move the project forward, the group agreed that the details

of implementation would be excluded from the draft brought to the September meeting because they were too divisive. At that meeting, some of the recommendations faced up-or-down votes, and several were eliminated. In the end the proposal is not a consensus document.

Nevertheless, a final draft went public on September 30, and the process entered a two-month vetting period in which community college constituencies and interested members of the public are encouraged to study the recommendations and voice their opinions. The Task Force will not meet in October and will, instead, assist Chancellor’s Office staff in presentations at meetings throughout the state [see sidebar on this page]. There are two open forums, one north and one south, but most of the presentations will be given at meetings and conferences already scheduled by statewide organizations. The proposal and a list of presentations is available on the Chancellor’s Office web site: <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/StudentSuccessTaskForce.aspx>.

The last two meetings of the Student Success Task Force are scheduled in November and December. At these meetings, the group will consider feedback from the presentations. The recommendations may be revised, and the draft proposal document will without doubt be edited. The final version will go to the Community College Board of Governors for a first reading at its January meeting. At its March meeting, approval of a final report is expected for delivery to the Legislature.

### Counter austerity message

As this process plays out, it is essential that faculty review

Continued on page 6

Date/Time	Event	Location
November 3-5, 2011	Academic Senate Fall Plenary	San Diego, Sheraton Hotel
November 4-6, 2011	Student Senate Fall Assembly	San Jose, Doubletree Hotel
<b>November 9, 2011</b>	<b>Student Success Task Force Meeting</b>	<b>Sacramento</b>
November 10, 2011	Association of Community and Continuing Education	N. Orange County CCD, Anaheim Campus
<b>November 16, 2011</b>	<b>Northern California Town Hall</b>	<b>Oakland, Elihu M. Harris Building</b>
November 17-19, 2011	Community College League of California – Annual Convention	San Jose, Fairmont Hotel
<b>December 7, 2011</b>	<b>Student Success Task Force Meeting</b>	<b>Sacramento</b>

With the exception of the town halls and legislative hearings, conferences hosted/sponsored by membership associations may not be open to non-members.

For an update of places and times of these meetings, to read the documents associated with the Task Force, and to deliver online comments, go to <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>

## Task force recommendations of special interest to ESL instructors

The current recommendations are critical for anyone teaching basic skills or ESL, in particular, and any students within those populations. They paint a picture of a successful student who attends full-time, takes only the courses necessary to the completion of his/her degree, certificate or transfer goal, and places as high as possible in terms of remedial education. They recommend that Title V and the Education Code be changed to reflect such a picture, and that financial aid and FTE be aligned with it.

Such recommendations will drastically alter community college education in California. They will limit access to such an education to new immigrants, older students, the poor and the developmentally disabled. They will eliminate many credit bearing remedial and ESL programs and replace them with tutoring, with technology, by training faculty in other disciplines to handle such issues within their courses, with noncredit or adult school courses, or by putting the financial burden on those students who need them to pay for them themselves. Moreover, they will limit the power of faculty and increase the power of the Chancellor’s Office to make such decisions. Is this your vision of success? If not, make your voices heard now.

By Kristine Fertel, LRCFT, AFT Local 2279



## Legislative Update

Judith Michaels, CFT Legislative Director

# Coalitions work

**co-a-li-tion:** 1 a) the act of coalescing; union b) a body formed by the coalescing of originally distinct elements: combination. 2: a temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action.

Our locals have been rapidly moving on Webster's second definition: temporary alliances for joint action. We spend time and energy building coalitions to amass the power necessary to accomplish goals that the locals of the CFT cannot attain alone. Complex issues increasingly require large numbers of people and many resources to win, or at least gain ground, on critical battles playing out in our locals and in the state legislature.

### California leads the way

This year we joined with higher education institutions, cities, unions, student associations, and community-based organizations to advance the cause of access to higher education, and send two bills of national significance to Governor Brown.

According to the University of California, around 65,000 undocumented students graduate every year from high school. California statute allows these students to pay in-state tuition if they have lived and attended school in California for the past three years. In the years since Governor Gray Davis signed that bill into law, we have continued legislative efforts to help undocumented students financially, only to see them stall, get caught up in the general immigration debate, or be vetoed by then-governor Schwarzenegger.

On July 25, 2011, Governor Brown signed AB 130 to allow undocumented college students to access privately funded financial aid. A companion measure, AB 131, opened Cal Grants and other state funded financial aid to them. They are still not eligible for federal loans, and, without federal legislation, their future, especially after college, remains in shadow because California alone cannot legalize the status of these young adults.

### A toll booth on the road to course access

As California constricts funding for our colleges, legislators propose "creative" approaches to fees, enrollment restrictions and student success, often aimed at pushing additional students through the system more rapidly, whatever the cost. We formed a coalition to help slow down, if not actually defeat, one of the most harmful, AB 515 by Assemblywoman Brownley. The bill proposed linking access to courses to the ability to pay by authorizing credit extension courses in community colleges. This first step toward privatization, amended many times since its introduction last February, passed the Assembly; when it moved to the Senate, the Senate Education Committee recognized that AB 515 signaled a significant departure from community colleges' open access mission, and, after an extensive hearing in that Committee, the Assemblywoman decided in July to leave it there until 2012 rather than risk a negative outcome.

We succeeded in stopping AB 515 for now because of activity by the California Nurses Association, the NAACP, and the California Labor Federation joining with community college-based groups, who made legislators aware of the threat. Local unions alerted and energized Central Labor bodies. Individuals and groups fanned out, contacting the bill's author, committee members, and their own representatives while a diverse lobbying team paced Sacramento's halls. While we succeeded in stalling AB 515, we will remain vigilant on this issue.

### Taxes and ballots

As the session drew to a close, CFT worked with allies on bills aligned with our goals and philosophy. A last-minute flurry demonstrated the importance of continuing lobbying coalitions. Governor Brown signed

AB 155, ending a summer-long threat by online retailing giant Amazon to launch a self-serving ballot referendum. Amazon dropped 10,000 local sales affiliates as part of its blackmail strategy to avoid collecting and paying to the state sales taxes *it legally already owed* when Brown promised to enforce California sales tax law. In this coalition we were joined by relatively unusual allies like local chambers of commerce. In return for the one-year tax-collection delay, Amazon will abandon its referendum campaign.

Governor Brown also signed Senate Bill 202, requiring all statewide initiatives to be placed on November general election ballots, concurrent with either a presidential or gubernatorial election, in addition to delaying until 2014 the vote on the proposed constitutional change requiring a rainy day fund. SB 202 posits that, if Californians must decide essential policy matters at the polls, the larger, more representative general electorate should be asked to decide them. Thus, on the very last day of session, legislators sent the bill to the governor to chill the efforts of proponents of ballot measures who try to manipulate the system by placing liberal or conservative initiatives on a given ballot.

These two examples illustrate our ability to effectively act in concert when circumstances dictate. As we did to secure a majority-vote budget, we will continue to work with other groups on a realistic solution to California's persistent revenue shortfall. Successful efforts rely on surveys and focus groups, and these are not inexpensive. Although it takes time and resources, coalitions can provide the opportunity for your local to work on state or national issues, thus expanding the scope and impact of your work. ☐

By Judith Michaels

### Building the Union *Continued from page 3*

he explains. "The district increasingly relies on part timers, hiring them when times are good, and letting them go when they're bad. This just perpetuates exploitation, which management describes as the 'need for flexibility.'"

The new communications strategy is basically a means to strengthen the base of the union, he believes, so that it can push back. "It gives us a stronger membership, and establishes clearer and closer ties between our leaders and the rank-and-file," he says. "Management pays attention. They even read our newsletters, which we know because we hear from them after we criticize them. It helps when they know what we're thinking."

The bargaining unit includes about 1000 instructors, nurses, librarians and counselors, of whom 750 are union members. "We get lots of email from them too," Goldstein says. General membership meetings, twice each semester, rotate from campus to campus, and the executive board meets twice a month. All meetings are open to members. Now union reps on each campus are preparing to send

out a survey in preparation for the next round of bargaining.

"We're not just worried about what happens to us in our own district," Goldstein notes. "We're eager to take part in larger political struggles. Our new state leaders are taking the union in a very activist direction, which we think is very healthy. Organized labor is being punched in the mouth, and it's important to respond in an aggressive, sophisticated and organized way."

The PFT already has a long record of participating in larger statewide efforts, including last year's March for California's Future up the central valley, and demonstrations in San Francisco, the East Bay and Sacramento to defend education. "We're reaching out to the No Cuts groups on our campuses," he says. "We're putting our money where our mouth is. We have very good folks in our union, who are trying to function under desperate and staggering teaching loads. So it's not easy. But that's where we want to go." ☐

By David Bacon



Goldstein meeting with Peralta Federation of Teachers executive board.

### Student Success *Continued from page 5*

the document and voice their opinions. Implementation of the proposal in its present form will have a significant impact on the nature of our community colleges. Open access and our students' freedom to engage in an exploration of their interests and abilities are at stake. There is considerable momentum already driving these recommendations with many in the public, some in the legislative leadership, and even a few in the community college system arguing that "California cannot afford to maintain the status quo."

Faculty must deliver a counter to this austerity message. Present economic stagnation cannot be

allowed to dictate the future of higher education in California. We must not give up the fight for investment in the future of our state. Through our unions and the academic senate, faculty have several opportunities to make a difference. We can raise our voices during these two months of task force presentations, we can carry our own vision of the future to the Board of Governors meetings early next year, and we can advocate for our community colleges when the Student Success Task Force proposal is debated in the Legislature. Faculty must prepare for these efforts now. ☐

By Richard Hansen

## Hendricks for CalSTRS Board

## Los Angeles faculty member will fight for you

PHOTO COURTESY SHARON HENDRICK



**"I will fight for a secure retirement for all part-time and full-time community college faculty."**

Sharon Hendricks is the CFT-endorsed candidate for the Community College representative on the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) Board.

Ballots for the election were mailed to all eligible community college faculty homes around October 1, and balloting is open until November 30.

Hendricks lays out what's at stake succinctly: "We are facing unprecedented attacks on teachers and public pensions

while also witnessing great economic instability. These are challenging times for our country, our state and our role as educators in the public sector. Politicians are using the attacks on our pensions as a tool to undermine unions and weaken the middle class. As the elected Community College representative to the CalSTRS Board, I will fight for a secure retirement for all part-time and full-time community college faculty. I will also keep you informed and solicit your ideas about challenges facing CalSTRS and its members."

Carl Friedlander, President of the CFT Community College Council, states that "Sharon Hendricks will be a thoughtful, forceful, and persuasive voice on the CalSTRS Board. She understands both the fiscal and political challenges our retirement system faces and she will engage in the kind of regular, two-way communication with faculty that the current situation demands."

Sharon has been working to ensure the retirement security of community college faculty at the state level, serving on the CFT and FACCC Retirement Committees as well as at the local level, speaking to local chapters and unions' faculty groups regarding CalSTRS issues and the attacks on teachers and public pensions. If you have questions for Sharon or want information about her campaign, please feel free to contact her.

**Website:**  
<http://www.sharon4strs.com/>

**Email:**  
[sharon4strs@att.net](mailto:sharon4strs@att.net)

**Facebook:**  
<http://www.facebook.com/sharon4calstrs>

**Twitter:**  
<http://twitter.com/#!/sharon4strs>

## FAQs FOR CALSTRS BOARD ELECTION

**Who is eligible to vote?**

Eligible voters in the election are persons who were members of the Defined Benefit Program and/or participants of the Cash Balance Benefit Program employed by a community college district during the 2010-11 school year, between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011.

**How long do we have to vote and when is the last day I can send my ballot in?**

You will be able to vote between October 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>. Voted ballots must be postmarked or received by CalSTRS on or before November 30<sup>th</sup> to be counted.

**Is mailing the ballot back to CalSTRS the only way to vote?**

When you receive your paper ballot in the mail, you will give three options for how to vote in this election. You can mail your paper ballot in, phone in your vote, or vote on-line. Instruction on these various voting options will be enclosed in your mailing.

**What do I do if I lost or didn't receive my ballot?**

For questions and generation information regarding this election, contact the Election Coordinator, Tom Barrett, at [electioncoordinator@CalSTRS.com](mailto:electioncoordinator@CalSTRS.com) or 800-228-5453.

## Governor's pension proposal bears watching

On October 27, Governor Jerry Brown announced his long awaited public employee pension reform proposal. Most of it relates to the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS), but portions are aimed at CalSTRS. He intends to take his proposal to the Legislature. Here are a few details:

The plan proposes that normal, ongoing costs of benefits be borne equally between employee and employer. Currently a CalSTRS member contributes 8%, and the full cost of the benefit is 17.7%. The current member contribution would be increased by slightly less than 1% to even it out.

It proposes new public employees receive a benefit combining a defined benefit and defined contribution plan that together, along with any Social

Security benefit, replaces 75% of employee salary after 35 years service. The defined benefit portion would be 2/3 of the 75%, and the defined contribution the balance. The defined benefit portion would equal 1.43% of pay per year of service. Currently the benefit at age 60 is 2% of final salary per year of service.

The plan proposes to increase the full retirement age for new members to 67, aligning with Social Security. Currently, the normal retirement age is age 60,

and the maximum age factor is usually reached at age 63.

The plan would require a three-year average final compensation, instead of the current highest twelve consecutive months after 25 years service. It would also limit post-retirement employment to 960 hours or 120 days per year.

The plan does not address the underfunding issues faced by CalSTRS. While we recognize that change is necessary, the



Governor's proposal requires substantial modification. The *Perspective* will keep you informed as the proposal moves forward.

For more information, including the CalSTRS official

response, go to [www.calstrs.com](http://www.calstrs.com). You may also want to look at the "Protect Retirement Security" website, created by the coalition of public employee unions that CFT belongs to, [www.letstalkpensions.com](http://www.letstalkpensions.com).

# Local Action

## San Francisco

### AFT 2121 responds to shifting budget plan

A recent message to the faculty of the San Francisco Community College District from its union: “We are angry about this inability to manage the deteriorating fiscal situation by the administration, especially after we received assurances by the District that it had found a way through the current year in dealing with the extreme challenges of the State’s cuts.”

The administration of the SFCCD, after much discussion, thought it had found a way to handle enormous cuts in the state apportionment to CCSF resulting in a \$13 million plus deficit. Now, only two months into the fall semester, that budget plan is unraveling. Administrative failures to implement the budget have already thrown the District off course to the tune of \$5 million. The administration has failed to offset expansions of programs and courses in some areas with contractions in other lower enrolled areas; and efforts to save money through attrition among classified employee ranks are not materializing to the extent needed, says the Chancellor, in large part because of new/replacement classified hires.

Attempts are now underway to close this overspending gap and bring the budget back on course, “but they will have a more extreme impact on faculty and students than would otherwise have been necessary,”

says Alisa Messer, president of the faculty union. Programs are being cut significantly, more than 3% in credit and as much as 8% in non-credit.

The local has sprung into action, to ensure that part-time faculty—until now, largely protected from cuts through a joint commitment between union and district—do not lose assignments due to this inability to follow the budget plan. Overload assignments and retirees’ courses will be cut first, and the district has committed to continuing to protect part-timers’ base assignments, says Messer.

## San Mateo

### Bosses get raises, faculty none; union turns down contract

If you ask the faculty, a tin ear would be among the more polite descriptions they’d give for the decision by the Board of Trustees at San Mateo Community College to raise salaries for management employees, including the district’s marketing director and controller. The problem? The district had just spent months in mediation during contract negotiations, telling the union that there was no money for raises for faculty.

As a result, a tentative agreement reached between the district and the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers was turned down by a resounding 213 to 50.

“This was unprecedented,” says local president Monica Malamud. “We usually ratify what we agree to, and our negotiators did the best they could. But after telling instructors for two years that there would be no salary changes, at least for us, the board vote was a shock. The contract rejection was a very important expression of anger.”

During the state’s ongoing fiscal crisis, negotiations have been hard in nearly every community college district, and San Mateo has been no exception. Nevertheless, the union felt it had achieved what was possible under difficult conditions. The tentative agreement, reached this past summer, included strengthened part-time seniority rights, improvements in the professional development fund, and a more realistic one-year time period for post-retirement contracts.

On August 19 the union executive committee voted to submit the agreement to faculty, with a recommendation that they accept it. On August 24, however, the trustees voted 4-1 to provide management with raises. The only vote against came from Board President Richard Holober, a former staff member for the California Labor Federation.

### Erroneous assumption

On September 7, the union executive committee rescinded its recommendation, and voted to submit the tentative agreement to the membership without one. Malamud told members, “The Board relied on faulty assumptions regarding

faculty salary comparisons to other districts. Board Report #11-8-2A stated, ‘To be consistent with the District’s salary range reviews of AFT and CSEA, staff determined that new classified and academic supervisory salary ranges should rank within the top three or four of the comparison districts.’ This statement rests on an erroneous assumption that AFT members’ salaries are already within the top three or four of the comparison districts, but in fact the salaries of a majority of our faculty are below the top three or four districts.”

Apparently the district had conducted a survey of supervisor salaries in the area the previous spring.

In explaining the union executive board’s reversal, Malamud said, “the Executive Committee came to this decision in order to uphold the principle that all district employees should be treated with fairness and equity.”

Joaquin Rivera, chief negotiator for the union, calls the subsequent vote by members to reject the agreement a backlash. “Yes, these are difficult times,” he notes, “but if they can find the money to increase salaries for one group, they should find it for all groups. Now they’re going to have to look harder for it.”

The union has asked the district to immediately resume negotiations, and to bring in the mediator. No meeting is set yet, although Rivera expects the district to sit down again by the end of October.

“The board has been too close to administrators,” he explains, “and has only listened to them. Board members never questioned anything in the district report on the supervisor salary comparison, or even asked to see any of the data. It turned out that the comparison just wasn’t accurate.”

## Los Rios

### Part-time instructor appointed to CFT Executive Council

In September Los Rios Community College District faculty member Linda Sneed became one of two part-time community college faculty (along with Sam Russo) on the California Federation of Teachers Executive Council.



**Linda Sneed wants part-time faculty to be included at every level of decision-making**

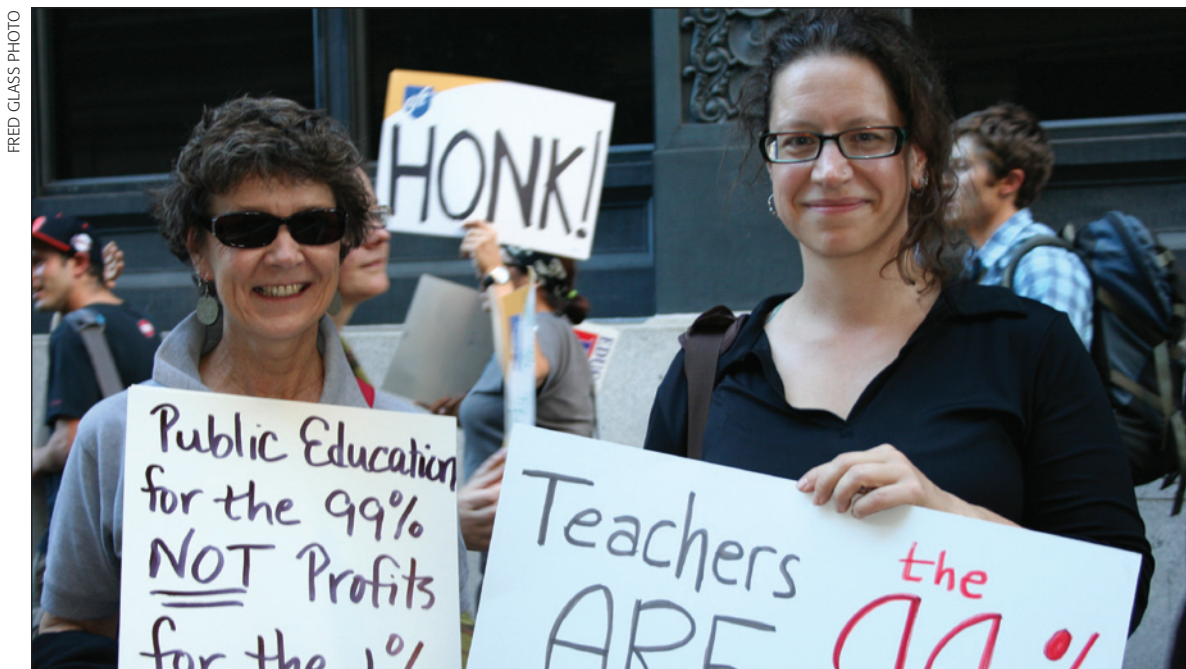
As a CFT vice president, Sneed will have the opportunity to help shape the strategies CFT employs state-wide to defend the strength and integrity of California’s public education system and to secure public and legislative support for our schools and colleges. She says, “It is now my responsibility and my privilege to help implement the resolutions passed by the delegates at our annual CFT Convention and to help establish the CFT’s annual budget.”

Sneed, who has taught English and writing in Los Rios since 2003, plans to watch out for part-time faculty in particular, but also community college faculty in general. She is “very much looking forward to bringing the realities, priorities, and great ideas of our part-time faculty to the attention of the CFT President, Secretary-Treasurer, and fellow Vice Presidents. We deserve working conditions, financial compensation, and benefits comparable to those of our full-time colleagues; we deserve job security; we deserve to be included at every level of decision-making where faculty have a voice.”

Sneed has been impressed by CFT’s politics: “I see our union, working on behalf of progressive tax reform at the state level, as visionary and proactive. To survive, let alone thrive, public education requires fair tax policies and our actions on its behalf. I’m really pleased and encouraged by our union’s commitment to policies that fit public academic labor into a broader social and economic landscape.”

Sneed invites you to share your ideas with her so that they can be part of the conversation at CFT Executive Council meetings. Contact Linda Sneed at [lsneed@toast.net](mailto:lsneed@toast.net) or call her at 812-325-2595. [cft.org](http://www.cft.org)

By Linda Sneed



California Faculty Association member Sheila Tully, left, and San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers president Alisa Messer, right, join with Occupy San Francisco members at a UESF-led rally against Rupert Murdoch and Jeb Bush (see page 4 article).