



# UNION NEWS

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All cover photos by Patty Felkner

## PROP 92: AN ANSWER TO CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMIC WOES?

By **Tonie Hilligoss**

California's politicians have created a mess. Every year, the state's expenses exceed its revenues, and every year, the governor and legislature devise deceptive accounting mechanisms that allow us to muddle through another year...if we can avoid catastrophic events that could easily topple their house of cards. The only choices we're ever presented with are cutting services or imposing new taxes, but those aren't the only choices we have.

A better option is to grow the economy! We all know that a healthy economy is dependent on a trained workforce, and employers all over the state tell us that community colleges are educating a huge percentage of their employees. With over 2.5 million students, that shouldn't be a surprise, but community colleges are so well integrated into their local communities that they're often taken for granted.

Public higher education is most often thought of in terms of the University of California and California State University, but community colleges educate 84%

of all the students in California's public college systems, and they do it for 50% of what it costs the CSU system and only 30% of what it costs the UC system.<sup>1</sup> Add in the fact that most of California's college students start at a community college,<sup>2</sup> and community college transfer students obtain GPAs as high as students who start as freshmen at UCs or CSUs,<sup>1</sup> and the value of community colleges becomes readily apparent. Universities produce graduates with Bachelor's and graduate degrees, but 59% of the jobs that need to be filled don't require that level of education.<sup>2</sup> A huge number don't need any kind of degree or certificate, but they do require basic skills in English and/or Math, customer service skills, a good work ethic, and the ability to learn on the job, all of which are taught in community college classes that are small enough for students to regularly interact with their instructors and be expected to frequently submit assignments, which contributes to the strong work ethic they'll need in the workplace.

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Dean Murakami

There is nothing like a little political confrontation to reveal where some of your friends stand on an issue. All of the major faculty organizations, CFT, FACCC, State Academic Senate and California Teachers Association (CTA), have always supported the basic principle of no fees for community college students. This was a basic premise of the original education Master Plan of California that would assure that all Californians would have access to a higher education. This is of great importance because education is the primary equalizer in which a member of society can improve his or her socio-economic status, build a career that is meaningful, can support a family, and adds to the tax base of California.

During this campaign for the Community College Initiative (Proposition 92) we heard many success stories from our former students and the opportunity that community colleges afforded them. Equally compelling were the goals and hopes that were expressed by our current students, many who said that a community college education was already barely affordable. This is why we have fought so long and hard to keep student fees low, especially when people at the State Capitol advocate for student fees as high as \$70-90/unit.

It was great to hear that SEIU 1000 is now neutral for Prop 92. That leaves CTA out on a limb as the only large California labor organization against Prop 92. CTA President David Sanchez has actually written the "oppose" argument that you will see on the February 2008 ballot. Two of his arguments actually make no sense at all. He writes that Prop 92, "Contains no accountability provisions to make sure the money ends up in the college classroom instead of being wasted on bureaucracy or administration." Apparently, he has forgotten about the 50% law which assures that at least 50% of that money will go to the classroom. I guess he thinks that the law or facts are irrelevant since most voters will not be aware of the 50% law and other regulations for the community colleges. In addition, Sanchez writes in the ballot pamphlet that Prop 92 should be opposed because current California community college student fees are "a third of the national average." Never let your principles stand in the way of an argument. I don't see how CTA can ever stand with us again on the no fee principle, or how they can visit a community college campus and say to students, "we support you."

I also want to give my sincere thanks to all of the Early Childhood and K-12 local unions in the CFT that voted unanimously to support Prop 92. They understand that the opportunity for a higher educa-



tion is extremely important when their students leave high school. I hope that you have contributed to the Prop 92 campaign; we have made it as easy as possible with a payroll deduction form. If you haven't contributed yet, I urge you to do so.

During the college forums for negotiations, I have heard a number of people raise the question of post-retirement medical benefits. I am the first to admit that what we provide our retirees is minimal and we should do better. Many of you are aware that all the labor groups have made this the year of healthcare reform. I have repeatedly lobbied and been part of demonstrations at the Capitol to provide universal and affordable healthcare in California. This is a critical issue for our current retirees and those of us who will retire in the near future. I have asked you to join us in some of those demonstrations; come join us in the future, let the governor and legislature know that this is an important issue for all of us in California.

Speaking of retirement, the Richman Initiative to drastically cut our pensions by 40-50% is still making the rounds for signatures. Please urge all of your family and friends not to sign the petition forms to qualify the initiative for the ballot. My hope is that it never qualifies, but I know Keith Richman is never a person to give up on something, no matter the opposition. He has come to CFT forums to state his case with all of us in amazement. He hopes to qualify for the June 2008 ballot in which there will be very low voter turnout; you can't ever predict how that type of election will turn out. If it does qualify, I hope that I can count on you to help us defeat it, by demonstrating, calling, and getting the vote out.

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I am Chair of the Legislative Committee for the CFT and we will be working on legislation to move the law which limits part time faculty to a 60% load, to 67%. This gives part-timers who teach a 5-unit class the opportunity to teach two of those classes. In addition, the district is very cautious about allowing part-time faculty to teach 60%, e.g. three 3-unit classes. By moving to 67%, the buffer of 7% should allow more part-time faculty to teach 60% loads. As we write the language and find a sponsor, I hope that some of you would be willing to come to the State Capitol and help me lobby for the 67% change. Please let them understand how it will directly affect you or your colleagues with your personal experience. Those personal stories are such a compelling argument to legislators and the governor.

I was part of a CFT group that recently met with two of our congressional representatives for the Los Rios District, Dan Lundgren and his staff and the staff from Doris Matsui's office. I want to say that both offices were very polite and wanted to hear our issues. Congressman Lundgren was particularly interested in the problems with No Child Left Behind for K-12, the Windfall Elimination Provision issue with Social Security, and the recent NLRB decision on the Kentucky Rivers case.

As you may know, the Windfall Elimination Provision reduces Social Security benefits for workers who earned both their own Social Security benefit and a public pension. The Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset of the Social Security law mandate a reduction in Social

Security benefits for members of state retirement systems equal to the amount provided through those systems. What makes these laws even more unfair is that employees in the private sector are not similarly penalized by the Social Security Administration and may, in fact, draw their company-sponsored retirement benefits as well as full Social Security benefits upon their retirement.

These laws would prevent anyone who has worked in the private sector and has tremendous experience and insight from considering a full time job at a community college or university.

The Kentucky River case involves a unilateral move of charge nurses, who do minimal planning, scheduling, and supervision, into the supervisor classification. As a result, they can no longer be part of a union. We see this as a potential problem in which many coordinators and department chairs could be unilaterally moved to management and denied LRCFT representation. This is an even greater problem in the private sector.

I thanked Doris Matsui's office for her sponsorship and support of the College Affordability Act, which is the biggest help to students of higher education since the GI Bill. I also gave information about Prop 92 and hoped for her support.

There are so many issues that are before us that are critical to our students and our profession. Now more than ever all of us have to participate and work together, to protect the future of community colleges.

**těn'yər, těn'yərd** REMARKS AT THE MAY 2007 RECEPTION FOR NEWLY TENURED LOS RIOS FACULTY

By Jane De Leon

Congratulations to each of you on receiving your těn'yər! And what does it mean to be těn'yərd?

For the lay person, the definition first springing to mind focuses on the permanence of position granted to an employee after a specified period of time. And yet, even though the second edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* presents only one context for using the adjective, "tenured" – a context referring exclusively to the condition of being academically tenured – it befits our celebration today to think about the further significance of tenure. From an etymological perspective, the words *tenure* and *tenured* are derived from the Latin verb *tenēō* and its infinitive *tenēre* meaning "to hold, to keep, and to possess." These translations, of course, re-enforce the significance of academic tenure as the condition of having job security, the condition which the tenured are privileged "to hold, to keep, and to possess." But today, I want to respectfully call to your attention another definition for the Latin infinitive *tenēre*, a definition that adds a second

dimension to our privileged condition of enjoying academic tenure. And that second definition – "to hold fast, to guard, to preserve, to uphold" – refers **not** to our privilege but to our responsibility. For as tenured teachers, we ought to hold fast to and guard the passion that inspires our work with our students. As tenured teachers, we are called to preserve the integrity of our classroom and of our curriculum. As tenured teachers, we must uphold the right of all students – no matter the level of academic preparation or financial wherewithal – to learn and to become contributing voices first in the classrooms over which we preside and ultimately in the communities of which we all – students and faculty – are members. And so on behalf of the Los Rios District Academic Senate, I welcome you to the ranks of the tenured, I congratulate you on newly becoming holders of this privilege of tenure, and I remind and encourage you to remember and to fulfill the responsibility to hold fast to our passion as teachers, to preserve the integrity of our curriculum, and to uphold and nurture the success of our students.

# CHIEF NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

By KC Boylan

As the new chief negotiator, I am truly honored to represent the interests of Los Rios faculty in collective bargaining. Twenty-one years ago, I graduated with my A.A. from ARC, after having spent 4 years struggling to complete my educational goals as a reentry student, a former high school drop out and single parent of 3 small children. Many people in the District know my personal story, and in many cases they have their own very similar stories. My commitment to Los Rios began during that time, and my commitment to the faculty is a direct result of the incredible dedication of teachers who went the extra mile to mentor me.

The encouragement and support of Los Rios faculty gave me the confidence I needed to complete my Bachelors degree in English and my Masters degree in Communication Studies; that encouragement also led me to apply for a full time teaching position at Sacramento City College in 1994, where I proudly accepted the title of colleague to those who had shown me the way. Now as a Folsom Lake College faculty member, I serve on the LRCFT Executive Board and have been a member of the negotiations team for two contract cycles. My academic preparation in communication and argumentation combined with 17 years of debate experience have prepared me well to accept the responsibilities of chief negotiator.

When I accepted the appointment, I was determined to work with the other members of the negotiating team to reach out to faculty in order to hear and understand all of the issues that impacted our members' working conditions. I am confident that all members of the negotiations team are committed to connecting with our members, and you all have responded overwhelmingly through the initial informal survey, the college forums, personal emails and telephone calls. Thank you all for helping us prepare for the hard work ahead.

The following are just some of the concerns shared across the district:

**Catastrophic Leave Donation:** SCC faculty have mobilized in support of a colleague who needed additional sick leave to care for a terminally ill spouse. Their efforts have spread, garnering the support of colleagues across the District. The issue has been raised at all four college forums, and echoed many times in emails sent from faculty who were unable to attend the forums. The voluntary leave donation would allow those who contributed to the program the opportunity to identify and help fellow faculty in need.

**Adjunct Faculty Issues:** Adjunct faculty have brought



forward many issues that continue to create challenges for the largest segment of our membership. Beginning with initial placement on the salary schedule, our adjunct colleagues are at a disadvantage. Unlike the initial full time faculty placement, which considers previous teaching experience, placement for adjunct fails to consider credit for teaching experience. Adjunct faculty also continue to seek pay parity, and an increase in the number of paid office hours to be paid at their regular Schedule B rate.

**Distance Education Issues:** One ongoing distance education issue involves the performance review process for online faculty. Currently, all four colleges have adopted differing approaches to the implementation of the online student questionnaires, and a joint LRCCD/LRCFT committee continues to explore options for distributing the questionnaires in a way that preserves confidentiality and ensures a student voice in the review process. Many have raised other distance education issues during the forums and through email exchanges. Faculty who currently teach online would like to see the number of online office hours increased to better reflect the actual time spent interacting with students through chat rooms, discussion boards, and emails. Others have expressed concern that their college schedules do not acknowledge courses taught online.

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# LRCFT CONTACTS

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**Athletic Coaches:** Athletic coaches have raised several issues that impact their working conditions. The first issue addresses workload compensation in the form of a coaching stipend. Coaching faculty are seeking an increase in the stipend to more accurately reflect the increased workload associated with the extensive job duties and related activities. Coaching faculty also face an unusual dilemma; if their teams are successful, the faculty may well work beyond the regular season without compensation, thus punishing faculty for achieving excellence. Another related collective bargaining issue involves the appointment, duties, and evaluation of athletic directors, a position that is not explicitly identified in contract language.

**Family Leave:** As with the catastrophic leave issue, faculty have mobilized across the district around the issue of family leave—maternity, paternity, and adoptive parents. While paid maternity leave may be the norm in every other developed country, it is unusual in the United States. And it remains illusive in Los Rios. One day of leave to care for a new born or newly adopted child does not reflect well on the District. Faculty should not have to use sick leave to fulfill this responsibility. Indeed, many younger faculty members believe that the archaic policies represent a barrier to recruitment of new faculty. It is clear from the forum responses as well as the flurry of emails that faculty would like to see Los Rios lead the way in discovering an “eloquent solution” to this problem.

**Workload Issues:** Many faculty have raised the issue of “workload creep,” that insidious encroachment of “other duties as assigned.” Through every venue, our members have expressed concern over the increased duties, the lack of time, and the impact on students and the quality of instruction. Educational master or unit plans, program review, student learning and program learning outcome development, curriculum review and revision, program development, assessment plans, accreditation, student advising, peer evaluation, hiring committees, department meetings and shared governance—all activities that are considered “professional responsibilities,” that pull time away from instruction and student contact, and that are not compensated. Beyond these duties shared by all faculty, composition faculty carry an additional burden; constrained by articulation agreements mandating word count requirements, composition faculty have workload issues that extend beyond the classroom. With class sizes between 25 and 30 students, and each student being responsible for 8,000 to 10,000 words, the amount of time to read and respond to student writing [cont. on page 7]

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# THIS OLD HOUSE – OUR NEW HOME

By Robert Perrone

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Finally, the Union has a place to call its very own! For all of its thirty-plus years it has lived an itinerant existence, moving from place-to-place, sometimes on its own, sometimes sharing an office with another organization. It has gone from J Street, to P Street in a housing co-op, to Eighth and L and, most recently, to Eleventh and L.

Last year, the Union's Executive Board authorized the president and secretary treasurer to begin a search for a building with the intent to purchase. After spending several months looking at numerous properties, some of which could only be described as 1930s Soviet-era block construction, the search came to an end at a Victorian at 2126 K Street in Midtown.

Title was passed to the LRCFT in November last year and, after extensive renovations and upgrades, none of which involved altering the essential period construction of the building, we finally moved in on June 18th. Landscaping was completed at the end of August. Minor work continues, mostly fencing. The last of the furniture was delivered just this week.

## 2126 THROUGH THE YEARS

The house at 2126 K Street was probably built in the early 1880s, although we have yet to do a title search. This much is known, however: based on its construction—ground level rooms with stairs leading to the first level, which probably served as the living quarters—indicate a pre-1906 construction, 1906 being the year, I believe, that the city built the first levees on the Sacramento River. Houses constructed before that year needed the steep staircase at the front of the building to protect the living quarters from the periodic floods that the city endured. In those early years, that ground floor space served as a storage space for a carriage. In addition to the stairs in front, I discovered another sign that the building was constructed in the 19th century. On April 30, 1918, a G. Hopkinson took out a permit to install a sink (some things don't change). According to the record of plumbing certificates, the building was described as "old."

From 1850, California was a community property state. This may explain why a majority of the early property owners on the square block bordered by 21st on the west, 22nd on the east, K Street on the north and L Street on the south, were women. Although a Mr. Hopkinson was granted the permit mentioned above, even in 1919 the property owner is still in the name of a woman, listed as Mrs. F. Hill. In fact, Mrs. Hill appears to have owned the building



as early as 1907, since that is the year in which her son, William, a machinist with the Southern Pacific Railroad, is listed in the telephone directory as residing at 2126 K Street.

The 1918 records indicate that the parcel had been subdivided into four sub-parcels, only one of which currently has a structure that is still standing—this one.

I hope you find this as fascinating as I do, because in subsequent issues of the Union News, as I do more research, I plan to share with you more of the history of this building and its neighborhood through the years.

By the way, that space on the ground floor, the former carriage storage area, now serves as the office of this writer, where I can look out a ground-level window at the people walking down K Street. I see people passing by and staring at the five-color paint job and the magnificent four-color sign in front, a perfect replica of the logo on the front of this paper. Someday soon, I hope to see you, too, walking by my window. You're certainly welcome, because this is your house. ■

All 3 photos by Robert Perrone



CONFERENCE AREA



RECEPTION AREA

## PROPOSITION 92

[cont. from page 1]

One of the best-kept secrets in California is that higher education can be enormously valuable even if students only take a few classes. Consider the potential employees whose poor English skills interfere with their ability to communicate until they take some ESL courses, or the stay-at-home mother whose children reach an age where she can re-enter the workforce but needs to update her workplace skills. How about the student straight out of high school who only has to take a few business technology classes to work in an office, or the returning veteran who needs just enough law enforcement courses to be a viable candidate for an agency's academy?

And consider all the certificate programs that allow students to complete a program in anywhere from four months (e.g. Associate Preschool Teacher, Nail Technician, Customer Service Certificate) to two years (e.g. Heating and Air Conditioning Engineer, Automotive Service Technician, Physical Therapist Assistant), to mention just a few of the hundreds of programs offered throughout the state. Completing these programs doesn't just help students; it helps the state in two very important ways.

The first wave of baby boomers will turn 65 in four years. Many have already retired, and most will have done so by 2011. Who's going to teach our preschoolers, fix our cars, clean our teeth, and do everything else we rely on trained workers to do for us? Most people who could be taught to do those jobs are not going to invest the multi-thousands of dollars charged by private trade schools, and many leave the K-12 system with such poorly developed basic skills that they can't complete those programs anyway.

The community college system is the only entity that provides training at a cost students can afford without incurring unacceptable levels of debt and provides them with the academic support services they need to succeed. All its vocational programs have advisory boards consisting of members from local industry, and they ensure that the curriculum is up

to date, which is why graduates of these programs generally go straight from the classroom to the workplace. Their employers know that community colleges produce the workers they need to replace those who are retiring.

The second way that community colleges help California is that a well-trained workforce allows businesses to prosper and, at the same time, allows workers to transition from being users of state services (such as education) to fully enfranchised taxpayers and consumers. For every \$1 invested in community colleges, \$3 comes back to the state in increased revenue from income, sales, and other taxes, "an amount that, over the lifetime of a cohort of 18-year-olds, will translate to a windfall of \$3 billion to the state in additional net tax revenue."<sup>5</sup> There is also the potential for attracting even more businesses as we increase our trained workforce.

Instead of continuing to fight about whether to cut services or raise taxes, why not give community colleges the resources they need to strengthen the state's economy while providing replacements for the massive wave of retirements that has already started? Best of all, this can be done within the existing tax structure, and California can begin moving toward fiscal solvency.

Too good to be true? Not in the least. Join us in teaching our fellow Californians that fighting for a bigger piece of a smaller economic pie makes no sense when training our incoming workforce can create a larger and more stable state budget. Community colleges have been held back too long by inadequate investment in their potential, but the Community College Initiative finally offers a way to address the state's history of fiscal irresponsibility. Help us grow California's economy by working to pass Proposition 92! ■

1 <http://www.faccc.org/initiative/CCCFacts.pdf>

2 Public Policy Institute of California Report, May 2007

3 Return on Investment: Educational Choices and Demographic Change in California's Future, November 2005

## CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

[cont. from page 5]

has emerged as a serious workload concern. Another workload issue that faculty have brought forward has been an ongoing concern, and over the years has seen some progress, but not enough: lecture/lab parity. Several faculty have raised the issue; however, science faculty have been the most vocal, as science labs are very work intensive for faculty. Finally, workload creep has perhaps impacted one category of faculty more than others—the department chair. Not only

are department chairs required to assume greater and greater administrative responsibilities in the areas of institutional planning (Educational Master Planning/ Unit Planning, Program review, SLO development, scheduling, staffing, hiring, etc...), but they also continue to receive dramatically different compensation for their efforts, reassign time versus a stipend. Faculty have requested that we revisit the compensation structures for department chairs. ■

# WE GET SURVEYS

By Robert Perrone

As of this writing (September 14), I have received 126 responses to the contract issues survey sent to all faculty via e-mail in early September. That's a response rate of about five percent, although responses continue to trickle in. We plan to re-send the survey toward the end of October, in case some of you were too busy at the beginning of the semester.

The issues that most concern people cover a very broad range, but several of those issues stand out for the frequency with which they are mentioned and for the passion expressed by those who give the issues great importance. At the top of the list so far is the issue of post-retirement health coverage. People are rightly concerned that the amount of money provided by the District to retirees for medical premium coverage will not be nearly enough to actually cover medical premiums.

I hope you will pardon me while I jump on my soapbox for a few sentences. The views I express here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the LRCFT's Executive Board. The current system of providing healthcare in this country is not worthy of a civilized society. The public well-being is being sacrificed for private profits. The average person is unaware of how poorly the U.S. healthcare system fares compared with other countries. While the U.S. spends more than any other country on healthcare in terms of actual dollars, the U.S. government spends about as much on healthcare as a share of GDP as the Canadian, British and, yes, Cuban governments do, even as private spending on healthcare in the U.S. far exceeds that of any developed country. In fact, a recent survey by the Commonwealth Fund found that the healthcare system in this country does about as well as Cuba, a Third World island that has been under economic sanctions for the past five decades.

While big business bemoans the high cost of providing healthcare to working people and uses that as a rationalization to send jobs overseas or downsize the workforce, those same capitalists have been in the forefront of every effort opposing universal single payer health coverage. Go figure.

Meanwhile, back in Los Rios, the recent \$15 increase in the District's contribution to retiree medical coverage cost \$7 million to fund. While the Union is certainly committed to continue addressing the issue of retiree medical and dental coverage, a more effective method of improving that coverage would be for all of us to join in the fight (and, it is a fight) for universal

coverage. If we did, healthcare for retirees would disappear as an issue. It can happen before you retire!

## OTHER BIG ISSUES

Up and down faculty ranks, from adjunct to tenured, the issue of pay equity is on the minds of many, whether it's lab/lecture equity or one single salary schedule for tenured/tenure track, adjunct, overload, and summer school instruction. Faculty are concerned about what they believe is an inequitable pay structure. Lab instruction has evolved to where actual preparation and instruction is just as time-consuming and difficult as any lecture format. Summer, adjunct and overload instruction present no material differences than instruction by tenured/tenure track faculty in the regular semester. The only difference is the office hour and college governance responsibilities required of full-time faculty. Judging from the responses, it may be time to recalculate what constitutes pro rata pay. Maybe 75% is too low.

Another issue that has brought out the best in Los Rios faculty is the campaign to implement a catastrophic sick leave bank. Many selfless faculty concerned about their colleagues have urged the Union since last semester to address the glaring absence of a program of this type. I would like to think that this is something that we can accomplish with little resistance, especially since the classified bargaining unit is close to an agreement on establishing a sick leave bank, albeit one based on contributions from vacation days.

Sometime in late November or early December you will receive another survey, this one comprised of those issues from the current survey that were most frequently mentioned. It will be an electronic survey requiring you to visit a Web site and prioritize various categories of issues.

If you have yet to fill out a survey, it is not too late. Go to the LRCFT Web site at [www.lrcft.org](http://www.lrcft.org) and click on Contract Issues Survey. ■