



UNION NEWS

VOLUME XXVI, NO. 3
MAY 2007

LOS RIOS COLLEGE
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
SCC • ARC • CRC • FLC

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CHIEF NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

By Dennis Smith

WHAT'S LEFT IN THE 2006-2007 FACULTY BUCKET?

For those who are new to Los Rios, the LRCFT many years ago negotiated a salary formula that guarantees a percentage of certain new California Community College budget line items will be used for faculty compensation. All of the employee groups have a similar formula and each group's share of funds is said to flow into their "bucket." That amount is usually distributed in two phases. Phase I distributions are used to pay for salary step increments, increases in health benefit costs, and other additional faculty costs during the year. After the close of the fiscal year (usually in mid August) if there are any funds left in the "bucket" there is a Phase II distribution of a lump sum check known as the "retro."

Every year at this time, I peer into my crystal ball and try to predict what I think the next retro check will be. For 2006-2007, the increases to the Community College System budget were quite large and, in addition to paying for the costs mentioned above, the salary schedules were improved by 2.5% as part of the Phase I distribution. My prediction is that the Phase II retro check could be about 5% of all earnings in 2006-2007 (excluding summer school) with as much as 2.5% as a continuing improvement to the salary schedules.

THE 2007-2008 BUCKET HAS A HOLE IN IT!

Assuming that there is no change in the Kaiser medical benefit options that LRCCD faculty and their families currently have, the 2007-2008 premiums are expected to increase by \$104.22 per month or 16.7%. The LRCFT is considering a plan that would reduce the rate increase to \$86.35 (13.9%) by increasing the insurance pool size in response to a request by the Los Rios Classified Employee Association to be added to our group. Because an amount equal to the Kaiser premi-

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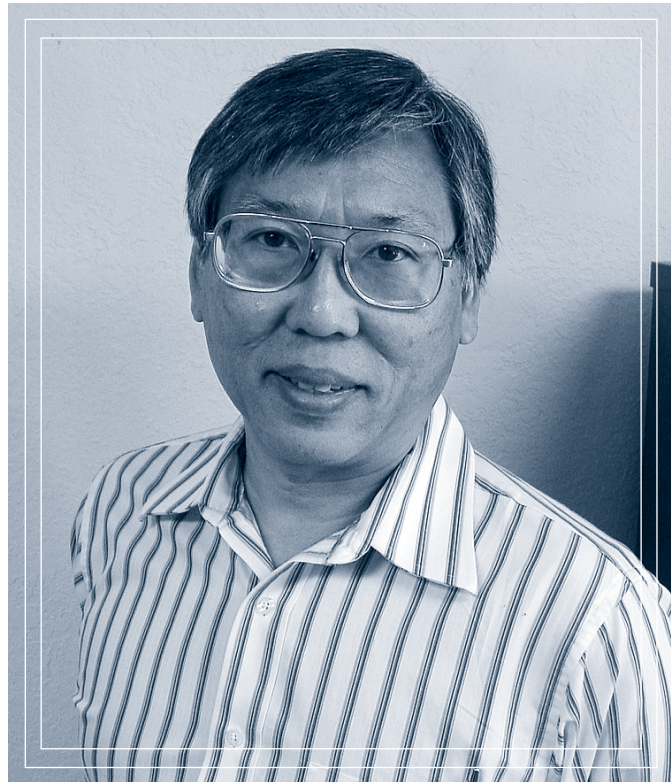
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Dean Murakami

CONVENTION(AL) WISDOM LOS RIOS STEPS UP

The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) had one of its most exciting conventions in years. This was the first CFT convention that I have ever attended in which the top leadership positions were being contested. George Martinez (Early Childhood Education-K-12 Council President) and Marty Hittelman (Community College Council President) ran against President Mary Bergen who had been the President for the past 18 years. In addition, Secretary Treasurer Michael Nye was being opposed by Dennis Smith (LRCFT past President and Chief Negotiator). All the campaign buttons, stickers, slogans, and signs provided the atmosphere of a political convention and all of us were caught up in the excitement. The results of the voting had Hittelman and Smith winning their respective races. It is remarkable that community college faculty now hold the top two leadership positions in CFT. It was clear that the delegates wanted a new direction and energy as we face the political and fiscal challenges in the future. We know that Dennis Smith will provide the clear and diligent fiscal organization needed at CFT so that it can continue to take the lead on education issues. LRCFT proudly and enthusiastically



and also newly elected to be a CFT Vice President. LRCFT has made a conscious effort to be active participants in the state level direction within CFT, and that effort seems to be paying off. The state level responsibilities to LRCFT have increased significantly, particularly since we are near both the Capitol and the State Chancellor's Office. We believe LRCFT can provide the leadership through CFT to help shape the agenda, effectively lobby the Capitol, and foster cooperative relationships among the community college organizations such as the State Chancellor's Office, FACCC, CTA, State Academic Senate, Community College League and others.

One of the critical discussions that will be coming up in the CCC concerns the 60% law. The CFT has long supported the 60% law, in which part-time faculty cannot teach more than a 60% load. We believe that some districts would like to hire non-tenured faculty on a full-time basis because they are cheaper, would be less active participants in governance, and would not have the safety of tenure to challenge decisions made by the district. Legislation introduced by Mervyn Dymally (AB 591) last month seeks to eliminate the 60% law. CFT took an "oppose" position, and I actively lobbied in Assemblymember Dymally's office against this part of his bill. Unfortunately, CTA and an organization of part-time faculty supported the bill. It has passed the Assembly Higher Education Committee, but will most likely not make it to the Assembly floor for a vote. Because of Dymally's bill, some in the CCC want CFT to change its position on the 60% law. The CCC will have a panel discussion on the topic at its next meeting. I personally believe that if you work full-time, then you should be tenure-track, no exceptions. I

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applauds Dennis as he moves into his new role, and he can count on our support whenever it is needed.

Other election results from the convention include Carl Friedlander's election as the new Community College Council (CCC) President. Our own Donna Nacey (SCC adjunct and LRCFT Secretary Treasurer) was re-elected as the CCC Secretary, and I was re-elected to be the CCC Northern Vice President

also believe that elimination of the 60% law would seriously erode the professional participation and responsibilities of faculty, and actually reduce the number of part time faculty. However, I would like to know what faculty (full-time and part-time) in Los Rios think. Is it time to reconsider the 60% law? Would it be better for Los Rios to have the option of hiring non-tenured full time faculty?

As Dennis Smith moves to his duties as Secretary Treasurer of CFT he will no longer be Chief Negotiator of LRCFT. I will recommend to the LRCFT's Executive Board at its meeting on May 18 that KC Boylan be the new Chief Negotiator. I am certain that she will be a strong advocate for faculty, an excellent communicator, retain the valued relationship with the district, and a skilled negotiator. Please welcome her as we enter a new round of contract negotiations next semester.

Speaking of contract negotiations, we will be asking you through surveys and forums to let us know your concerns about the contract. In January we will "sunshine" our list of contract issues and negotiate with District representatives in the spring 2008 semester. Near the end of the spring semester we will present the tentative contract to the LRCFT membership for their ratification. If you have any issues you think should be considered for negotiations please contact KC or any of your college LRCFT representatives so that we can keep a list of contract issues.

As most of you know, the Community College Initiative has qualified for the February 2008 election! This is a monumental accomplishment, and I want to thank all of the faculty, students, administrators, and staff who helped make this possible. This is another step in a critical journey that will provide accessibility to community colleges for California's citizens and let us provide the programs that will make our students successful. It is estimated that the Initiative will bring \$30 million more to the Los Rios district over three years. These additional funds could be applied to a wide variety of issues, such as student programs, matriculation, improving part-time benefits and office hour pay, reassigned time for department chairs, improve the 75:25 ratio, the faculty bucket. Los Rios employees contributed over \$100,000 to the effort to qualify the Initiative for the ballot. However, we are asking for you to contribute again to fund the campaign, and help us educate the public (distribute literature, write letters, phone bank) so that it will be approved in the February primary election. The Initiative will pass only if we work together. It is not a done deal; there will be opposition, especially when there is an initiative to change term limits on the same ballot. This may be the most critical initiative in the history of California's community colleges. Its passage will shape the community colleges for years to come. Let's continue to play a leadership role in this effort. ■

CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE

By Sue Roper, Alex May, and Bruce Zenner

Imagine your spouse has become terminally ill and needs your care for an indeterminate period of time. Naturally you would want to take sick days to spend time with your spouse. What do you do when you have run out of sick days? Abandon your spouse? Lose your job?

One of our colleagues is in exactly this situation. If only we could donate some of our accrued sick leave to help our desperate colleague. Some faculty members would like to see the union negotiate a Voluntary Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation program into our new contract.

A PROGRAM SUCH AS THIS WOULD ENTAIL TWO THINGS:

a. donations by interested faculty of a portion of accumulated sick leave (at least one day) to a sick leave pool, or to an individual, and

b. use of this donated time by individuals in need of extra sick leave (for their own catastrophic illness or of their family members).

Such programs have already been adopted by the federal government, the State of New Jersey, and numerous educational institutions, including community colleges from Pasadena, Contra Costa, Sierra, Cabrillo, Sonoma State University, for example.

When you are asked to indicate which contract issues are important to you, please consider the benefits of such a program. ■

CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

[cont. from page 1]

um is completely paid from the LRCFT salary bucket for all eligible faculty and their families, and because the Kaiser rate increase is so high, those faculty using either of the Health Net system plans will see a slight decrease in their monthly out of pocket costs. For PacifiCare HMO system users, the monthly out of pocket cost increase will be about \$17.39 per month.

As if the medical insurance cost increase weren't enough, the dental insurance cost will also be going up. Fortunately, the increase is only a few dollars monthly plus a one time only charge of \$6.36. These increases in the medical and dental premiums will be part of the Phase I costs to be paid out of the LRCFT bucket of funds coming from the yet to be finalized 2007-2008 Community College System budget.

Since California's economy is not producing the same level of revenues this year as it did last year, the 2007-2008 Community College System budget picture is less than rosy. Our state level advocates (including many faculty leaders from Los Rios) are working through the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) to protect and preserve a minimal level of funding necessary to provide for the cost of serving additional students and to assure a cost of living adjustment to cover inflation. The outcome of this effort is but one example of what our CFT dues are being used for and is also why every faculty member should also join FACCC now.

GETTING A BIGGER BUCKET AND FIXING THE FAUCET

Thanks to the signature gathering efforts and the contributions of many of us, the Community College Initiative (CCI) is now qualified for the February 5, 2008 ballot. The initiative's official title is the, "Community College Governance, Funding Stabilization, and Student Fee Reduction Act" and its name sums up what it will do. The CCI will strengthen governance by putting the statewide system of local community college districts into the California Constitution along with the K-12, CSU, and UC segments of public education. Without harming the K-12 system and without raising taxes, the CCI will stabilize community college funding, thereby guaranteeing that community college enrollment growth will be provided for as part of the existing Proposition 98 formula. Finally, the CCI will assure that every Californian will have the opportunity to go to college by reducing



student fees to \$15 per unit and effectively capping them there.

Research has shown that California's economy grows by three dollars for every one dollar invested in higher education. For Los Rios, the increased funding over the next three years is projected to be more than \$30,000,000. Those dependable dollars could result in more classes, more tutors, more counselors, more learning resources, and given the existing negotiated revenue formula, more competitive salary schedules. Faculty and staff are encouraged to think about the benefits of the CCI and make a generous contribution to the campaign when the retro checks are distributed in August. If you already have a plan for the retro, then you may wish to consider the option of a limited term payroll deduction for the CCI.

OTHER NEGOTIATING ISSUES IN PROGRESS

In the last edition of the Union News, I wrote about some "sticky issues" that we continue to work on. Protecting faculty rights during investigations of "inappropriate" computer use, student complaints, or discrimination allegations remain at the top of the Union's priority list. Not far behind in the list of ongoing issues is the defense of faculty intellectual property and the terms and conditions of faculty sabbaticals.

Additionally, the LRCFT and the LRCCD continue to study the effect of outside criteria on the workload of faculty in certain disciplines. Specifically, we are examining the workload of faculty who teach general education classes that include significant student writing requirements in order for those classes to articulate with the CSU and UC programs. We are also studying the workload differential for coaches as a result of changing requirements of the Commission on Athletics. Finally, the Union and our counterparts

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in administration are working to create options to alleviate the extraordinary workload impact on nursing faculty from grant funded projects, LRCCD public private partnerships, and changing requirements of the Board of Registered Nursing. A preliminary report of the findings and recommendations of the LRCFT and LRCCD Workload Study Committee is due in May.

STEPPING UP AND STEPPING BACK

As some of you may already know, I was recently elected to a two-year term as the Secretary-Treasurer of the California Federation of Teachers. This is sort of a déjà vu experience in that I began my union work when former LRCFT President, Michael Crowley came by my office one day to ask if I could help the union by accepting an appointment

to an open position as Secretary-Treasurer. I did not know what I was getting myself into when I agreed to step up and accept the offer. When certain CFT leaders first approached me to consider seeking the office of Secretary-Treasurer, I was reluctant to do it because I knew exactly what I was getting myself into. Nevertheless, I agreed to run and am honored to have been elected.

My Sacramento office will be in the same space that the LRCFT now occupies and I am pleased that I will be able to continue as the Past President of the LRCFT. However, I will be stepping back from service as your Chief Negotiator as of June 30; this will be my final column in that capacity. Now it is time for others to step up and serve the Los Rios faculty through our Union. How about you? ■

PLURALITY OF PERSPECTIVES

By KC Boylan, LRCFT FLC/EDC College President

When I first began representing FLC/EDC on the LRCFT Executive Board, I assumed responsibility for communicating union issues to adjunct and full time faculty and for communicating their issues back to the elected officers and the members of the negotiating team. For many years, I have distributed materials to faculty mailboxes and I occasionally leave additional materials in the workrooms for those I might have missed.

Most of the time the information is directly related to LRCFT workplace issues and publications; sometimes, however, the information reflects the Executive Board's recommendations on political candidates or issues that involve California community colleges in general.

Though I once heard someone complain about the clutter on the countertop, I have never heard anyone complain about the content of the literature. I thought, "Surely, someone must hold a position counter to the one being promoted by the union." The silence has concerned me.

An article in the March 2007 Union News sparked a response that I had been awaiting for quite awhile. The brief section in the President's Report explained that the LRCFT Executive Board approved a resolution in support of 1st Lieutenant Ehren K. Watada, who had refused deployment orders to Iraq, arguing that the war was illegal. Without much discussion, the

resolution was passed by the Executive Board as an anti-war statement, consistent with public positions previously taken by the AFT, CFT, and LRCFT. On March 14 2007, I received an email from a fellow member of LRCFT, a retired officer and combat veteran, Dr. Gordon Lam. Gordon eloquently explained that he disagreed with the actions of the Executive Board and argued that Lt. Watada's "apparent disregard for his responsibilities and commitment to his oath as a commissioned officer of the United States Army were inconsistent with his principles and ethics."

Dr. Lam's email was a reminder to me that the Executive Board represents all of our members, even those with whom we disagree, and it is incumbent upon us to seek out and to give voice to dissenting opinions. Our strength as a union comes from honoring the voices of all members; however, we cannot grow in strength if our members remain silent.

Thank you, Gordon, for reminding me that diversity of perspective is to be valued and not avoided. I only hope that others are willing to follow your lead. ■

CFT CONVENTION

By Andrea Balsamo, Thomasina Turner, and Gary Martin

This year's CFT convention was my first active involvement with LR-CFT, and I wasn't sure what I would be learning in the process. In retrospect, I have to say that it was a great, fun and exciting opportunity for social, personal and union process learning. Being a first-time delegate representing our local chapter, I was trying to absorb all the information I could during the many workshops available to the delegates. By the end, yes, I was exhausted, but I was very satisfied because I was able to meet so many interesting and diverse people during the convention. My personal highlight of the two days in Los Angeles was the collaborative effort of our entire delegation to support and help Dennis Smith with the preparation of his speech for CFT Treasure. It was a great and fulfilling experience, and I consider myself fortunate to have been part of our delegation. The two days in Los Angeles opened my eyes to the many interesting issues affecting all of us, and because of this very positive experience, I have decided to become more involved at the local level.

Andrea Balsamo
ARC Adjunct Business Professor



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As an experienced conventioneer at professional conferences and at the statewide Academic Senate, little did I expect what I found at the convention of the California Federation of Teachers, LRCFT's statewide affiliate. First, this three-day meeting had a much more global and political perspective than I had anticipated. Alarm over mass killings in Darfur, and political unrest with killings and kidnapping during a teachers' strike in Mexico were high profile concerns. Teachers from the K-12 schools were particularly vocal during presentations by politicians and other convention speakers, some waving signs or hissing when they disagreed with the speaker. The Mayor of Los Angeles and a congresswoman who spoke about "No Child Left Behind" successfully weathered those reactions with professional stoicism. Second, the mix of diverse opinion and approach was particularly invigorating. There appeared to be little evidence of a middle ground. Delegates were either entirely for an idea, or they were resoundingly opposed. Issues surrounding community college part-time adjunct faculty and a desire for pro-rata pay with full-time faculty were among those issues. While we here in Los Rios have already dealt with much of this concern, clearly other districts are not as far along the path to agreement. Third, the other delegates representing Los Rios impressed me. Not only were they thoughtful in their discussion of the union issues, but also they worked hard to protect the hard fought victories and agreements that we already have in place. One solution doesn't fit all in a state like California, and the delegates worked diligently to insure the CFT statewide convention did nothing to undermine the values, relationships and successes Los Rios has created. Finally, the convention was a great opportunity to once again witness what a first-rate organization the Los Rios district is in California. While other districts, K-12 and community college, decry corruption, rampant spending, nepotism, and government and regulatory interference, here at Los Rios we move forward in what appears to mostly be an eye in the storm, setting watch for bad weather, and laying strong foundations for on-going stability. It's the people we employ who make the difference, and I'm even prouder to be one of them having attended the CFT convention.

Gary Martin
CRC TV and Film Production Professor



Going to the convention was a great learning experience for me because I had no real understanding about how union the chooses its battles. I had no idea that everything was voted on and approved by the general audience at the convention. I also had no idea that the union was supporting and fighting for such a wide range of causes.

Participating in the campaign and ultimate election of Dennis Smith was also a wonderful experience. He was so generous and ego-free in inviting all of the delegates to his hotel room to critique his speech. We all assembled there on two separate occasions and listened as he honed his speech over and over again. He was very open and most gracious about accepting our criticism. I was amazed at the way he was able to listen to everyone's opinions and reshape his speech accordingly. In the end, I think that our help did bring out the best in his speech and that it was the speech that ultimately defined his victory.

Thomasina Turner
CRC Professor of Spanish

CFT CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

all photos by Sharon Beals



**DENNIS SMITH IS CONGRATULATED ON HIS
NEW POSITION- CFT TREASURER!**

IT'S ABOUT MORAL, NOT MARKET, VALUES

By Lori Pierce

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MORALS

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I was nearly 30 years old before I first heard a lecture by an African-American woman with a Ph.D. I had a B.A. from a small, liberal-arts college and a master's from an Ivy League divinity school, but up to that point, I had never been in a classroom where the professor was an African-American woman.

And I had never given that much thought until that one day when I was invited to hear a visiting lecturer give a talk. I will never forget the odd unsettled feeling I experienced as I sat through her lecture, shifting in my seat, wondering to myself, "What's / wrong/ here?"

At first, I thought I was merely having a physical reaction to my surroundings -- too crowded or too cold. But weeks later, as I recalled the episode, it finally dawned on me: I had never faced myself in the lecture hall before.

It was almost a decade later, at the very end of my graduate-school career, before I found a mentor. Up to that point, I had stumbled through the way many of us do -- aimlessly pursuing my interests whether or not my teachers liked my work, or me. I was well into the dissertation-writing phase when a senior faculty member took an interest in me (or took pity) and began to actively edit my words, challenge my unsupported arguments, and confidently reassure me that I would get my doctoral degree.

And it wasn't until a faculty member actually said to me, "You're good, you can do this," that I understood what I had been missing.

My presence in the academic world is an accident. I pursued my interests as an end in themselves and, gradually, stumbled into a career. I only began to reflect on my relatively solitary path through the academic world when I began to work as a full-time faculty member.

A liberal-arts college hired me to provide a temporary dose of diversity. It was not a tenure-track position and my colleagues made no real effort to keep me on. (Perhaps I was just a bad fit.) But for two years I wondered just what they were expecting.

As the only African-American female faculty member on the campus, clearly I represented what the college meant by "diversity." But when I asked questions designed to prompt thinking about the relationship between the college's history and mission and the rel-

atively homogeneous state of its faculty and student population, I was met with blank stares.

The day the hometown newspaper ran an interview with me, it also ran an item inviting everyone out to a local high school's slave auction. When I pointed out the painful irony to colleagues, they were sympathetic but not moved to action. Diversity, it seems, didn't mean being committed to a critical analysis of historical systems of oppression and how institutions continue to perpetuate discrimination and privilege. Diversity meant hiring "one of each."

Achieving institutional diversity is often pursued as a question of market values rather than a question of moral values. We appoint compliance officers and give search committees marching orders to go out and find the candidates who fit the bill.

Who hasn't served on a search committee and combed through CV's, applications, and letters of recommendation to find some glimmer of diversity: "She belonged to Delta Sigma Theta!" "He's a Morehouse graduate!" "I wonder if that's a Chinese Lee or a Southern Lee?"

Diversity becomes a goal in the strategic plan that can ostensibly be met once some kind of proportional representation has been achieved. Diversity, or so the argument goes, will give a college a competitive edge in the market. More students will be attracted to a multiethnic college environment, bringing their tuition dollars with them. More faculty of color will likewise be attracted and retained, reducing the costs of that annual search to replace the solitary scholar of color who had had enough.

That approach is doomed to failure, and the evidence is all around us.

When it comes to gender, faculty ranks are more balanced than ever before (approximately 40 percent of full-time faculty members are women), but 80 percent of full-time teaching faculty members are white. Asian Americans (6 percent), Native Americans (under 1 percent), African Americans (5 percent), and Hispanics (3 percent) remain woefully underrepresented across the board.*

That state of affairs promises to continue. A few minority scholars will drift into academe, more by osmosis than anything else. And people will debate the diversity problem ad nau-

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seam, talking about best practices and targeted marketing.

But diversity isn't a problem to be solved. Our task isn't to comb the earth looking for just the right combination of qualities and characteristics that, once found, will make our faculties sufficiently multicultural.

Instead, our task is to approach the matter of diversity as a question of moral values -- our own, our profession's, and our institutions'.

If we value difference, we should do so not as an antidote to tedious homogeneity, but as the stuff of critical thinking. We should value difference, not because it is a successful marketing ploy that draws student dollars, but because it reflects our commitment to overcoming the historical legacies of institutional discrimination and privileges that we all live with and benefit from. If diversity is our value, then our practices will emerge in ways that are natural and integral to our institutions.

Valuing diversity in a small rural college might mean that many years go by without a minority faculty hire but the campus still works to address issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality, of discrimination and privilege, as they become apparent in that campus community.

A campus committed to diversity might not have achieved proportional representation among its faculty or students, but its professors are still working within their professional organizations to encourage minority graduate students whether those students choose to work for them or not.

Minority students are going to college at greater rates than ever before. Why, then, hasn't there been a corresponding rise in the number of nonwhite graduate students? Are professors looking out into their lecture halls and seeing potential colleagues among the first-generation college students? Are we, as faculty members, ignoring the soaring cost of higher education that keeps poor and working-class students from attending or completing college?

I was one of a handful of African-American students at the liberal-arts college I attended as an undergraduate. I came from a family that could boast college graduates dating to the Jim Crow era. I was active in campus life, won awards, applied for competitive fellowships, wrote a senior thesis in an independent study program.

I worked closely with several professors.

But not one of them ever said to me, "You should go into the business. We could use someone like you." None of them ever looked into the future and saw me as a colleague.

Those of us in the faculty ranks today have to take responsibility for the abysmal rate of minority faculty representation by taking responsibility for the students who are under our care now. That burden should not fall particularly on the shoulders of minority professors. It is a responsibility we all share by virtue of our privileged positions.

We have a chance to reach out to students who may not, on the surface, seem as if they are our future colleagues. If we hope to solve "the pipeline problem" and achieve the diversity to which we pay such devoted lip service, then we need to spend time reflecting on the distance between what we believe and what we actually do.

Those privileged students -- who were guided through college and graduate school, who saw their faces reflected in that of their professors so regularly that it was unworthy of comment -- have to do more than merely decry the lack of qualified candidates.

Audre Lorde once said that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. We cannot expect to solve the problem of faculty diversity by following the same scripts and pursuing the same policies that we always have.

Lori Pierce is an assistant professor of American studies at DePaul University. ■

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*As of fall 2005, Los Rios numbers for full-time faculty [only numbers available] were: A majority was female; 68% were white; 6.8% were African American; 9.8% were Asian/Pacific Islander; 9.5 % Latino; 2.4% Native American [ed.]

THE TRINATIONAL COALITION FOR THE DEFENSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

By Gabriel Torres

In 1993 the United States Information Agency (USIA) and other US based foundations were initiating efforts to coordinate higher education institutions on a trinational level. The impetus for this effort was the need, as seen by the US government, to reinforce the economic integration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This was to be accomplished through cultural integration, which in turn would be facilitated by higher education institutions in the US, Mexico and Canada. This cultural integration would be accomplished through an “educational common market” and the creation of a new “North American Identity.”

In January 1993 the Trinational Coalition for the Defense of Public Education in Canada, the United States and Mexico decided to hold a conference, “The Future of Public Education in North America,” sponsored by the Evergreen State College Labor Education Center in Olympia, Washington. This effort was to be funded by educational unions in all three countries. The objective of this conference was to organize a “North American Public Schools Commission” that would parallel NAFTA’s Free Trade Commission and defend public education against NAFTA’s privatizing logic. Over two hundred union delegates attended the four-day conference. The conference issued the “Olympia Declaration” in favor of public education as a social right. This declaration said in part:

“In order to protect the social fabric of our countries, we support an alternative education model that recognizes the right of self-determination with respect to culture, language, education and communication, that is based on social participation and subject to democratic processes, that promotes continental development which includes a plan to eliminate the Mexican debt, that guarantees a just distribution of wealth, recognizes the sovereign rights of states and sustains the dignity of all peoples, establishes a code of conduct for transnational corporations which protects basic labor and human rights such as the right to a just salary and defends and protects the environment.”

The Trinational Coalition has organized biennium trinational conferences in Washington state (1993), Morelia, Mexico (1995), , British Columbia, Canada (1997), Queretaro, Mexico (1998), Zacatecas, Mexico (2000), Ontario, Canada (2003), and Oaxaca, Mexico (2006).

The Trinational Coalition has been involved in numerous other actions in support of public education in the Americas. Most recently the Coalition organized a letter writing campaign in support of Mexico’s National Teachers Day on May 15th, 2006. Also in 2006, the Mexican section of the Coalition mobilized Mexican unions to support striking Ontario teachers and British Columbia teachers fighting the anti-union legislation of the provincial government. In November 1997 the Coalition organized a forum at the Law School of Mexico’s National University on the subject of standardized testing. The Coalition brought experts from the United States and Canada to help analyze the potential effects of a new standardized test called the Examen Unico. In November 1998, in Mexico City, the Coalition organized the forum which led to the creation of Red [Spanish for “network” ed.] SEPA, or the Civil Society Network for Public Education in the Americas. The purpose of this network is to bring Latin American unions into the discussions created by the formal participation of Education Ministers in the negotiations around the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Additionally, the Coalition has been supporting the work of filmmaker Jill Freidberg, who produced “Granito de Area,” a film about the Mexican teacher’s movement to democratize their unions and fight the neoliberal agenda in public education. Finally, from January 26 through January 28, 2007, the Coalition organized a Oaxaca Strategy Conference in Vancouver Canada in support of the Oaxacan teacher’s mobilization, which began in May 2006 and continues through today. I attended the conference representing the LRCFT.

The Coalition agreed on a five-part campaign to support the Oaxaca teacher’s movement. Briefly summarized, the five agreements are the following:

1. To continue pressuring the Mexican government to stop the repression of teachers, to free all political prisoners, to lift all arrest warrants against Oaxacan teachers, and punish those responsible for the disappearance and assassination of teachers and of the peoples of Oaxaca.
2. To utilize the EI (Education International) meeting (Feb. 12th to 14th in Vancouver), the EI Board Meeting (March 27th to 29th in Berlin), and the EI’s global conference (the third week of July in Berlin) to raise the issue of Oaxaca; to invite EI

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president Thulas Nxesi to go to Oaxaca as soon as possible; to invite the EI to consider an action in solidarity with Oaxaca; to offer Oaxaca as the central theme for EI's world teacher day, October 5th; and to ask EI to request that the International Labour Organization investigate violations of ILO Conventions on the right to organize and the right to freedom of association in Oaxaca.

3. To organize a U.S.-Canada tour with a delegation from Oaxaca (with teacher, parent and student representatives) beginning in April in the United States and Canada in order to refocus attention on Mexico and the situation in Oaxaca. The visit to numerous cities in the U.S. and in Canada would culminate in a presentation at the United Nations in New York of a demand for intervention to bring

about a resolution of the situation.

4. To ask our affiliated unions to determine the economic leverage they have in relation to Mexican corporations and the Oaxaca situation.
5. To establish a Trinational Coalition website for the dissemination of the situation our unions are going through.

If you have any questions about the Trinational, please contact me at torresg@crc.losrios.edu, or contact one of the Trinational coordinators, Dan Leahy at danleahy43@yahoo.com.

Sí se puede! ■

LRCFT LOSING TWO IMPORTANT VOICES

By Robert Perrone

The end of this academic year will mark the retirement of two former members of the LRCFT's Executive Board, two people who have served the Union and their faculty colleagues for many years—Lanny Hertzberg, CRC Anthropology professor and Talver Germany, FLC/EDC counseling professor and adjunct professor of art.

For more than eleven years, Talver Germany represented her FLC/EDC colleagues and advocated for counselor's issues on the Union's Executive Board as a campus representative from EDC. During that tenure on the Executive Board, she also worked tirelessly as a member of the Union's negotiating team. Talver gave of herself willingly and without compensation. She will be retiring at the end of this academic year. The Union has commissioned her to create a piece of art for the new Union office building.

Lanny Hertzberg's tenure on the Union's Executive Board began in 2001. Lanny represented the Union on technology and intellectual property rights issues during contract negotiations. He was also an indefatigable advocate for his colleagues at CRC as a campus representative. He brought to the Executive Board many years of union experience as a local president during his years as a teacher in the Elk Grove School district. He also served as the Union's technology guru when purchasing new computers and in remedying computer problems at the Union's office.

The LRCFT will miss both of these valuable voices and we wish them well in retirement. ■

By KC Boylan

“Not a team player.” Exactly what does that mean? Recently I have been approached by faculty members who are concerned that they will be perceived as “not being a team player.” Worried that this depiction will appear in their performance review or that it will influence future assignments, they are unwilling to object to requests presented by more senior faculty members, department chairs, instructional deans, or other administrators. These requests may include teaching overload assignments, trading classes with more senior faculty, teaching four or more preparations, accepting a teaching schedule spread out over multiple locations on a single day, or for adjunct faculty, accepting a teaching load below the level of preference.

Occasionally, these requests appear to be in violation of the contract, causing faculty to seek guidance from someone more experienced in workplace issues. All faculty members have the right to approach a union representative for guidance and information on any contract-related issue, without fear of retaliation. Indeed, the “team” consists of all available resources, including other faculty members, administrators, academic senate representatives, and the union. ■

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CRC PROFESSOR HONORED BY THE JOURNALISM ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

By Robert Perrone

Rubina Gulati, a CRC journalism instructor, was honored by the California Journalism Education Coalition as an outstanding instructor of the year at JACC’s annual convention in Sacramento March 22-25.

Professor Gulati has been teaching journalism since 2001, but has been a leader in journalism education, including the adoption of distance education techniques.

CONGRATULATIONS RUBINA! ■

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