



# UNION NEWS

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## SLO DOWN 2.0

By Troy Meyer

Since Josh and I wrote our article last spring on Student Learning Outcomes, we've had the pleasure of hearing from colleagues who said the article sparked conversation. This is excellent! We could ask for no more satisfying response. In addition, we have had questions and requests for clarification. This article is meant to address those and also to reflect on current trends.

One question we've been asked is, "where did Student Learning Outcomes come from?" By Student Learning Outcome, of course, we mean the new requirement to track and report simple success markers outside divisions, not the healthy awareness of classroom performance in which most faculty have long been engaged. The drive for simple metrics of accountability in higher education did not originate with ACCJC or WASC, though those bodies are being used to enforce the practice; SLO's were created as a result of federal pressures that, at least in part, are the result of long-standing lobbying efforts by those who have a personal vision for how to manage higher education. It's worth noting that these pressures have spread beyond the federal level: the California State Legislature and State Chancellor's Office, via the Student Success Task Force, are currently embracing similar language. Whatever Student

Learning Outcomes will be or have become, there can be no doubt that a desire for greater accountability for professors was how SLO's were born.

The term Student Learning Outcome was the product of the Federal Commission on the Future of Higher Education, also known as the Spellings Commission. Margaret Spellings, who chaired this committee, was President Bush's Secretary of Education from 2005 to 2009, and she was and is a vocal proponent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). She has also been explicit in her view that NCLB forms of accountability should be brought into public higher education to provide accountability for professors and institutions. Hence, SLO's were created to function as a reportable metric.

An excellent account of at least some of the attitudes which informed the Commission's work can be found in a recent interview Time Magazine conducted with President Bush on No Child Left Behind which can be found here: <http://ideas.time.com/2012/01/12/lets-not-weaken-it-an-exclusive-interview-with-george-w-bush-on-nclb/>. I recommend anyone interested in SLO's or NCLB read it. The President is quite clear: Spellings believed we could not evaluate the success of our educators without absolute

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and statistical measurements. President Bush has never been one to hold back, and in this remarkable article the President defends the need for this kind of accountability by declaring, "People don't like to be accountable." By this he means teachers and professors. He assumes that teachers would prefer to work without oversight or assessment, that we are not really interested in improving our performance, and this is how he interprets the complex and often intelligent resistance to NCLB (and SLO's), responses which he reductively labels "union issues."

Having never taught at the K-12 level, I cannot begin to address the success or failure of NCLB. I will say that I admire NCLB's goal to improve educational outcomes for underrepresented groups, even if some of my friends who do teach at that level question its success in achieving that goal and are critical of NCLB as a whole. But community college faculty should make no mistake: there is a very real possibility that the way that SLO's are and will be understood by many state and federal Legislators, by those who

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fund us, is one channel to provide external, statistical accountability for professors and campuses; at the very least, SLO data could well be read this way by the accreditation teams and many administrators. At this time Student Learning Outcomes (as far as I know) are not leaving my campus; they are not being used to evaluate individual instructors or programs; in fact, they are not being used for much of anything besides (in some cases) helpful local reflection within departments. Yet, we are still required to track and report them, and WASC/ACCJC continues to raise the bar as to how much information we provide and how widely we collect it. The pressure to produce more detailed outcome data from nearly every course we teach is likely to continue. All this causes me to remain skeptical that the required implementation of SLO's is merely to impress on us a useful pedagogical tool (and as an important aside, only some faculty have found the new SLO's useful; many of us feel SLO's are simply wasting valuable time and doing nothing to improve our instructional quality). I believe the facts show that it is impossible to separate SLO's from the larger and ideologically charged accountability movement.

As someone who has taught in the community college for nearly two decades, I find the entire "accountability" movement a bit cynical and certainly uninformed. Cynical in terms of who teachers actually are and what we actually do and with whom we do it: in my opinion, this entire phenomenon, from SLO's to the "Report Cards" the California Student Success Task Force is insisting be posted online for each college, misunderstands the dedication of the professionals who teach. The culture of the community college is already a culture of instructional excellence unequalled in California higher education.

Nor do I think the accountability movement, whether it becomes attached to outcomes-based funding or not, is likely to make significant changes in outcomes. But, and this is a critical point: it would be easy, listening to rhetoric from voices as diverse as President Bush and Margaret Spellings to Nancy Shulock and Chancellor Jack Scott, for an outside (and voting) observer to assume that the community colleges have no accountability in place whatsoever; that no useful oversight of individual faculty or college performance is in place; that we pontificate in our regalia from the top floor of the ivory tower in blithe disregard of our students.

This is plainly not the case. It is not that college professors "don't like to be accountable." What we want is to be held accountable in meaningful ways and by people who understand our work. Who better to provide that service than experienced colleagues? Hence, our unions and administrations have negotiated peer review teams consisting of instructional faculty from



our areas of expertise and deans with instructional backgrounds. We have layers of administration committed (at least in Los Rios) to the functional management of our colleges. The Boards of Trustees provide critical oversight. And significantly, we have accreditation teams of experienced faculty and administrators from across geographic areas whose job is to peer intently into what our colleges are up to and how we are performing (something they have long done without agenda-driven edicts from those who work outside higher education). These teams consistently make detailed recommendations and then hold us legally accountable. The fact is that collegial accountability and quality control are an integral part of the community college system. Could these processes be enhanced or improved? Perhaps. That is part of the role of collective bargaining and our ongoing dialogue with accreditation. But the potent, and false, narrative behind the external, statistical accountability movement, and this includes SLO's, is that any person outside education (like a Legislator) can pick up a spreadsheet and see how a college is doing as though campus faculty are making shirts or selling insurance policies.

**"SLO's are not a pedagogical movement; they are a political movement ..."**

This is not to say that examining statistical information such as pass and retention data or the percentage of transfers and degree completions is without merit. We should be aware of such numbers. But this approach can quickly become misleading and toxic when such information is removed from its holistic, real-world campus context, and worse, when it is removed from the challenges in the lives of our students. Consider for a moment a group I mentioned earlier, the Student Success Task Force, a commit-

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tee of twenty persons, and their attempt to reshape our community college system in order to improve student success in California. One of their multiple recommendations is that "Report Cards" be placed online for each community college. They would like to see transfer and degree completion rates, along with other statistical data they feel define success for each institution, posted on the Internet. I am not sure what good use the public can make of such numbers, but the fact that these spreadsheets are to be called "Report Cards" will make that decision for them. The public and the Legislature understand that term. Our institutions will soon be evaluated by those outside education in terms of our statistical outcomes. The theory, of course, is that if we are held publicly accountable, we will get our academic acts together under the pressure of public scrutiny. As if concern for our students and commitments to our professions were not enough.

What will these "Report Cards" actually cause? Only time can tell. But how will Los Rios appear to the voting public in the next bond initiative if SCC's transfer numbers have not improved year to year to year? Or if we grant slightly fewer degrees than the statewide average? How interested will the average armchair evaluator be in nuance, in the nature of our student population or the levels of the categorical funding we receive from the state?

The foundational issue, then, is not SLO's in isolation; it is the complete philosophical shift in how performance in higher education is to be evaluated, away from a long-standing, traditional academic community model to a simplistic and statistical approach that ignores the complex nature of our culture, an ideological revamp unique in our generation. Am I saying SLO's are all bad? No. As Josh and I said in the last article, we evaluate learning outcomes every time we grade a paper. But I'm also saying that the accountability system we have long had in place, while perhaps not perfect, is by no means broken, and that SLO's are not likely to do much to improve the lives of our students or our faculty. The primary reason many of us see students who are able to do the work drop from a class is because of economic or personal difficulty, a change in job schedule, the loss of a job, difficulty getting adequate health care, the inability to afford a textbook or reliable transportation, and, often, arching over all, lack of support and expectations from family and peers. I don't know this from examining statistics; I know this from talking to students.

The real dialogue over student success should begin, then, not with teachers "who don't like to be accountable," but by taking a hard look at social equity, investing in outreach into the communities where our students struggle most.

The new accountability movement comes, disturbingly but not surprisingly, at the same time as other shifts: challenges to open access, curtailments in financial aid, changes in repeatability that will become even more challenging with the new alignment of the census and drop dates; these new policies will hit our least prepared students the hardest. Also, there is clear language coming out of the Legislature and the State Chancellor's Office and the Student Success Task Force (which is chaired by the State Chancellor) that we limit the historically broad-based mission of the community college; not only has lifelong learning essentially disappeared, but according to the SSTF, students are supposed to declare their career intent their first year and stick to that decision as they move, as quickly as possible, into the work force. For some students, this is exactly correct; for others, it ignores the complex realities of their lives and decision paths. In the push to produce a workforce with the greatest possible utility, humanities courses have already been cut at the community college (but, as far as I know, not at the CSU or UC) because they allegedly lack vocational merit. And intriguingly enough, tucked away in the Student Success Task Force report, is the demand by the SSTF for funds to increase the size of the State Chancellor's Office at a time when our district alone is turning away thousands. Off-campus management is to grow, and their role in assessment is to grow along with it. No wonder they want quickly accessible metrics. But who should be held accountable here for failing to meet the needs of our students? Faculty or the politicians?

The most common, and difficult, question Josh and I have been asked is,

**"what should faculty who oppose SLO's do?"**

Some have said they refuse to participate in the SLO process at all. We never suggested this in the last article; there are some decisions tenured faculty must make on their own. Actually, the creative ways our colleagues are currently managing the pressures to implement SLO's, to keep instructors involved, has merit (though how long the current degree of control will last is anyone's guess). But that is not the most useful response to the new accountability movement we can offer. The solution lies in another direction.

The best strategy community college educators have is this: we must get our narrative into the public and legislative domain and keep it there! That will take effort, and it will be playing the long game, but it is the only response that has the potential to produce real change. We are by nature and training communicators and educators, and we must educate those who make decisions which affect us. I am not willing to say, as one leader in the statewide Academic

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Senate from outside Los Rios said to me, that the SLO “battle” is over, that we can expect our faculty to go through “stages of grief” as they are forced to begin reporting SLO’s. I would rather use a quote from my friend at FACCC, Jonathan Lightman, who said, reflecting on the entire advocacy process, “Politics is never over.”

SLO’s are not a pedagogical movement; they are a political movement, and the curtain never falls on the political stage. ■

## BUDGET WOES AND THE BATTLE OF THE INITIATIVES

By Dean Murakami

While the discussions about further section cuts have begun again in Los Rios, this is all in response to the serious budget difficulties we are facing. As noted in Chancellor Harris’s email, the community colleges are facing an additional \$149 million deficit for the current budget year of 2011-12. This is above the anticipated budget trigger \$30 million in cuts. While the State Chancellor’s office warned the legislature about a potential \$25 million student fee shortfall last year, that has now turned into a \$107 million shortfall. Add in a \$41 million property tax shortfall, plus additional shortages and you have this incredible midyear cut with less than four months left in the budget year! We are hoping that the legislature will help backfill at least a portion of the property tax and student fee shortfalls. We would not be in this mess if the community college system did not tie student fees directly to our funding which was vigorously fought by faculty groups. But, this is why we need your help in lobbying the legislature so that we can minimize the cuts we will have to make in classes. It has such a detrimental effect on our students and part-time faculty.

The Governor’s proposed budget in January for 2012-13 does not get much better. The Governor actually has proposed to increase community college funding by \$218 million, but that has been allocated to buy down the deferrals. While buying down \$218 million of the current \$961 million in deferrals is important, however, this means that none of the money can be used to prevent class sections cuts, save a part-timer’s job, provide additional counseling, offset our healthcare increases, or help in our categorical programs. He has also proposed to block grant all categorical programs and will reduce the number of Cal Grant recipients by 30%.

All of this was predicated on the passage of his original Tax Initiative. If the Governor’s Initiative fails then that will trigger a \$2.4 billion cut to Prop 98,

which translates into a \$264 million reduction to community colleges leading to a 5.56% workload reduction. This means a \$12.2 million cut to Los Rios and a \$6.2 million cut to the Faculty Bucket. The February estimate by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) of the triggered Prop 98 cut to community colleges has gone from \$264 million to \$292 million. The numbers keep getting worse. The LAO predicts a \$6.5 billion greater deficit than originally forecast in the Governor’s budget. This is more than what the Governor’s Tax Initiative is expected receive in revenues of \$4.8 billion. So, the Governor will have to make significant cuts to his original budget proposal.

There were three competing tax initiatives that are gathering signatures right now, the Governor’s, Molly Munger’s and the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) Millionaires Tax, all of which are trying to minimize the cuts to public education and



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services. I chaired the committee at the CFT that helped formulate the Millionaires Tax Initiative. We spent most of 2011 doing focus groups and polls of declined-to-state and moderate Republicans to determine if there was a tax proposal that could pass the voters. This is how the Millionaires Tax Initiative was formulated and this is why it has done well in the polls. Out of the five polls that have tested the three different tax initiatives among likely voters, the Millionaires Tax Initiative always comes out on top.

After we filed our initiative, all the news outlets focused on Governor Brown’s and Molly Munger’s initiatives, with CFT barely mentioned at all. However, all the polls show that Munger’s initiative has no chance of passing. CFT’s Millionaires Tax Initiative was still given little thought as we brought it to the California Democratic Convention in February. Our initiative caught a spark from the convention delegates, there was a lot of buzz about it, and people were lining up to sign our petitions. All of a sudden the Governor’s Tax Initiative moved to the back of the line. Just before Governor Brown was to give his keynote convention speech he asked our President Joshua Pechthalt what kind of deal can be made for us to drop the Millionaires Tax Initiative. When he gave his convention speech to rally the delegates to support his tax initiative, all he said was, “We’ve got to pass a tax measure...You’ll get your marching orders soon enough.” The support for the Millionaires Tax Initiative at the Labor Caucus and Progressive Caucus at the convention also indicated that there was a change in momentum.

Governor Brown and his Chief of Staff Nancy McCadden went directly to CFT President Pechthalt’s home not too long ago to see if CFT would drop the initiative. Pechthalt offered that if both sides would compromise then we could probably craft a new initiative that both could support. Governor Brown rejected the idea and CFT would not back down. Not much happened afterward until the polls showed that the Governor’s Initiative would not pass if the Millionaires Tax Initiative was on the November Ballot. In addition, CFT just added \$1 million into the signature gathering account which meant that it would definitely qualify. Over the March 10th/ 11th weekend, both Assembly Speaker John Perez and Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg contacted Pechthalt about a compromise initiative. A general outline of a compromise was formed on Tuesday evening, March 13th and the CFT Executive Council approved the compromise the next afternoon. The CFT Executive Council discussion was contentious and the vote was by no means unanimous.

I am truly disappointed that we are not continuing with the Millionaires Tax Initiative. I and so many

others put everything we had into crafting the basic outline of the initiative, organizing for signature gathering to get it qualified, and were planning for the campaign in November. The Millionaires Tax captured the voices of hope from the grass roots organizations across the state, the disenfranchised, the Occupy movement, progressives, and so many others outside the traditional political power base in the state. CFT was building a coalition beyond political parties and labor unions, a true voice of the people of California. So now it is hard not to feel like you have suddenly lost a loved one.

The new reality is the vote has been done on the compromise and the Governor will get the signatures for it to qualify. Like any politician, he will have his back-up plan just in case something goes wrong. However, the new initiative feels like the child of a distant acquaintance and we no longer feel the urge to invest our time, emotion, and money to help it. In time I hope that can change and we can promote this new initiative because it will bring more money to community colleges and Los Rios, and if it doesn’t pass we will be looking at a minimum of 6% in salary reductions in the near future. Hopefully, that is enough to motivate us.

### What are the critical points about the Compromise Tax Initiative?

1. There will be a ¼ cent sales tax increase for four years.
2. It will increase personal income taxes for seven years. For each dollar above \$250,000 it asks an additional penny in taxes. For each dollar above \$300,000 it asks an additional two cents in taxes. For each dollar above \$500,000 it asks an additional three cents.
3. According to the Department of Finance, the compromise initiative will generate \$9 billion in additional revenues the first year and about \$5-6 billion in subsequent years. This is more than what the Governor’s Initiative of \$4.8 billion predicted by the LAO.
4. The revenue from the Compromise Tax Initiative goes into the state general fund.

We hope that you can be supportive of the Compromise Tax Initiative, because we need your help to get the signatures for it to qualify and then pass in November. This initiative will not stop the budget crisis in California, but it may help us to keep our heads above water until the economy recovers. The budget cuts the last three years have been devastating to our students, programs, and faculty. If we are going to reverse this trend we need to do it now before it is too late. ■

# STAFFING SCHEDULES ROUND ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

By Kris Fertel



Since it's spring...one of the most fertile areas for germinating new disputes between members and other members or members and management is staffing. Staffing is often erroneously conflated with scheduling. Scheduling is where the seeds of conflict are often gathered but not sown. So let's begin there in Article 4.

"Scheduling" is determining weekly student contact hour (WSCH) goals for major subject areas, workload goals for other service areas, creating class schedules and deciding class sizes in order to meet overall assigned workload goals. "Scheduling" also includes efforts to achieve a range consistent with legal/accreditation constraints, accommodate the needs of students, ensure the quality of education, and utilize facilities efficiently (4.5). To put it succinctly, "scheduling" is deciding what to teach, when to teach it, where to teach it and how often, if you're faculty. "Scheduling" is a plot of land on which we have many rights, as it is part of our shared governance and professional responsibility to cultivate and toil upon it so that the harvest will be abundant.

Staffing, on the other hand, is neither our responsibility nor our choice, although we are often invited, or otherwise enlisted, to participate in the process. Staffing is the work of management. It is their job to reside in the farmhouse and delegate who will do what in the field. However, as we are unionized paid laborers, we do have certain protections to try and ensure that the work is reasonable and that we are not discriminated against. We also have the right to have our preferences heard by management and to

be directly provided with a written explanation as to why they were not met upon request (4.5.3). As we square up those buffer strips, be careful not to get confused as to who is responsible for maintaining them, as that can be unclear when many of our fellow laborers are acting like managers under the title of department chair. Keep in mind that, ultimately, the choices are not theirs to make nor are grievances to be filed against them.

In short, generally, you can't grieve that you were asked to work within the work week or work year specified in your part of the contract, that you were asked to work Fridays or Saturdays, that you were asked to work at a specific time of day or evening, that you were asked to teach a certain course or level or perform a certain task that is within your job description and related qualifications, that you were asked to hold a minimum number of office hours on campus or that you were assigned to teach a course that is at an outreach center, as all of those possibilities are what you signed up for when you accepted the job. However, this was prefaced with "generally," as there are a few exceptions and many protections in your contract you should review and consider.

In terms of exceptions, all members should be aware that if you have a physical or psychological disability that requires accommodation and/or limits your ability to perform certain tasks, you should contact a union representative and make sure that you are talking to who you need to talk to, compiling appropriate documentation and enlisting the support of relevant support services to ensure that you are legally protected and adequately outfitted and accommodated to perform successfully. Never put yourself in the position of meeting with management to be interviewed or interrogated about such constraints without representation, especially if there are mental health issues that impair your ability to communicate effectively on your own behalf. You may also be exempt from certain assignments based on your individual job description, qualifications or concurrent contractual responsibilities.

In terms of workload protection, get to know the particulars of Article 4. Article 4 is divided into classroom and non-classroom faculty/staff with a special section with additional information for adjunct employees. A core component for all unit members is that workload distributions must not

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# RAVITCH RALLIES SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION TEACHERS AND OUR UNIONS

By Linda Sneed

In late January, Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education and author of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Public Education*, rallied an enthusiastic crowd at the Sacramento Convention Center (at \$5 a head, all donated to a children's leukemia foundation) to recognize the nature of the current "crisis" of public education: "The real crisis," she insisted, "is that public education is under attack." Those promulgating the alarmist narrative of "failure" of America's schools, Ravitch argued, are corporate reformers pursuing the twin goals of privatization of public education and de-professionalization of public school teachers.

Clearly, anyone with children should care about this trend. But why should community college educators pay special attention to K-12-focused debates about the quality of America's public compulsory school system?

**We face the same pressures and the same carrots and sticks, justified within the same misleading narratives, that are being used against K-12 educators and their allies.**

Corporate-driven reform movements, legislation demanding greater "accountability," and the demand for "student success" as measured by performance on standardized tests have manipulated and bullied the public school system for decades. What these corporate "reformers" want for K-12—privatization and de-professionalization, translating to increased profit for a select number of individuals and industries—is what they want for community colleges and other public colleges and universities.

According to Ravitch, teachers' unions are both the reformers' primary target and the greatest hope for our nation's besieged system of publicly funded, free-to-affordable education for all. The profit-driven, self-appointed saviors of public education who attack K-12 teachers' unions are attacking ours, also.

Therefore, if we care about our students and our communities, we must recognize the rhetorical splitting of teachers' and students' interests as a false dichotomy



between "us and them." We must refuse the insidious characterization of teacher and faculty unions as undermining quality education and students' well-being, pointing out the dearth of evidence that privatizing education and weakening teachers' employment rights actually improves it. We must counter this ideology by informing ourselves and the broader public about documented correlations between quality education and strong teacher and faculty unions. Indeed, we must reframe the discussion, helping others see what we live every day: teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. They are neither separable nor in competition.

How do we do this? According to Ravitch, we "speak out," "act up," and "write, write, write: blog, write letters and emails." And if that doesn't work? "We use direct action," Ravitch argued. We channel our passion for affordable education into compelling, creative public action demanding social and economic justice and equality of opportunity for all. ■

# REMEMBERING MICHAEL CROWLEY

By Pat Kirklin



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Michael Crowley, who taught English and Photography at CRC for 31 years, passed away on March 18. During those 31 years he also served as the president of the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) for six years, from 1987 to 1992. He was an early supporter of the LRCFT and took an active role in certifying the LRCFT as the union representing Los Rios faculty. In a heated contest, the LRCFT was overwhelmingly approved by faculty as the bargaining agent over the local CTA affiliate. Posters from that campaign in 1978 line the walls of the Union's office.

Michael was one of the first officers of the new union, representing CRC faculty on the Union's Executive Board. During his time on the Union's Executive Board, Michael was the main recruiter of new members. He also was instrumental in forming the LRCFT Political Action Fund Committee and in convincing his colleagues to voluntarily donate money on a monthly basis through payroll deduction.

Under Michael's leadership, the LRCFT increased its membership numbers from 40% of the faculty to 70%. In 1990, he led a successful campaign to implement "fair share/agency fees." Michael was president when the LRCFT negotiated the "salary bucket and trombone clause" innovations in the contract. Those two concepts are still being emulated by community college locals up and down the state.

While Michael was president, he successfully steered the Union from the brink of bankruptcy. He also guided the Union through the difficult process

of hiring a new executive director. Even though he had planned to serve only two terms, he decided to serve another term in order to guide the Union through that transition period.

After his retirement, Michael was the recipient of the prestigious Ben Rust Award, given each year at the convention of the California Federation of Teachers. The award honors union members who have made significant contributions to the union movement.

Michael was a devoted family man who raised five children of his own and also raised foster children. He was a deacon at his local Catholic parish. He was a motorcycle and bicycle enthusiast and found time to build his own wooden boats. He was also an accomplished photographer and helped establish the CRC photography department.

Some people might have described Michael as "eccentric." He owned a strange assortment of pets—a raccoon and a cat that liked to take baths with him and his wife. He dressed in Birkenstock sandals and suits and ties off the rack of thrift stores. But, when all is said and done, Michael was the consummate English teacher, loved and respected by his students, colleagues, union brothers and sisters, fellow parishioners and family; a wonderful human being who will be greatly missed by all whose lives he touched. ■

## MICHAEL J CROWLEY & ME: A REMEMBRANCE

By Richard Guches

Nearly 50 years ago, August 1964 to be exact, I walked into a classroom at Rio Linda High School and was introduced to fellow teacher, colleague, and soon to be best buddy, Michael J. He was about to begin his second year teaching, and me, my first. We had each served in the US Army, he as an officer with ROTC experience, me a draftee. Over the next six years we travelled similar paths: teaching high school in the day and classes at American River College in the evening. We lived on the same street only a few doors apart. And in our private lives we were each increasing the size of our respective families. Often commuting together, having dinner together between our day and evening teaching assignments, we found ourselves talking more and more about boats, specifically sailing, and about our mutual union activism. We became really good friends, buddies, if you will; never ever letting Michael's strong religious belief and my equally strong disbelief in any way interfere. In 1968 we each moved our families to the foothills in the Newcastle area, to what I called mini-ranchettes, where we each had large gardens and raised critters to eat.

Quite suddenly, in September 1970, I went full time to ARC and Michael went full time to CRC. Our commuting and dinner lives took a hit, but not our companionship around our increasing union involvement and our sailing. Michael built a small sailboat, a San Francisco Flyer, that we learned to sail on Fol-

som Lake, and then trailered down to the Sea of Cortez, Mexico for a fun frolic, just the two of us.

Michael graduated through the ranks of the union to become its president. Later I did the same. He continued his boat building and took up bicycling, he and his beloved Sissy, biking on a cycle built for two on adventures such as around Ireland.

We saw each other less frequently in the last 15 or so years because I spent many of those years sailing in the tropics off Central and South America and visited the Sacramento area less and less frequently, but tried to always save an evening to catch up with Mike and Sissy.

I will now have even less motivation to leave my enclave in the forested mountains of Southern Oregon to venture into the big city. I often said that one of the things I most enjoyed about a career as a college professor was the constant change: new class schedule, new students, new preparation, telling the same old jokes to fresh faces. The passing of Michael, however, is a change I truly lament. Sadly, that is the inevitability of life. ■

(Richard Guches taught English at ARC for many years and was LRCFT President from 1995–1998)

# IN HONOR OF MIKE CROWLEY'S PASSING

By Chuck Van Patten

On March 18th Mike Crowley, our beloved friend and former colleague, passed on from cancer.

Mike had a long record of more than two decades of service as a leader in the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT). He was the LRCFT president for six years. Mike's service as a union leader was defined by his vision for social justice that came out of his understanding of Biblical justice from the teachings of Jesus and the Hebrew prophets. To Mike, social justice favors the least advantaged or marginal of society, of a culture or of an organization like Los Rios. He applied that vision and those principles to his union activities.

Mike was at the negotiation table when Pat Kirklin was LRCFT president. That group established the trombone clause that has been the basis for LRCCD salary policy for almost 30 years. The idea that salaries would be cut in difficult times such as ours instead of doing layoffs to junior people is now a strong part of Los Rios culture, but to Mike, it was consistent with his conception of social justice. It affirms an equality among persons and rejects hierarchy or ranking. That salary policy, as Kirklin recently said, created labor peace.

Mike further served Los Rios by being the LRCFT's major player in bringing about IBA when he was president. He reinforced the democratic culture of Los Rios by negotiating the Interest Based Approach (IBA) with district administrators. IBA, if followed with good faith by both sides, allows for interests of multiple parties to be met by creative and elegant options working together collaboratively by stake holders. The very idea and process of IBA inspires creativity, empathy and democracy among participants. The fact that the LRCCD board has officially established IBA as policy is a huge piece of Mike's legacy of service. When the board officially endorsed IBA policy, that meant Los Rios was officially committed to democracy. And while some employees of Los Rios may be cynical about IBA, the fact remains that when it is followed in good faith - and it can be as alive as the stake holders wish it to be - the "win-win" consequences include more democracy and more peace.

Mike's service to the faculty was also apparent in establishing "peer-review" in the contract. When AB-1725 passed, peer-review was mandated by the bill.



But the bill did not specify what form peer-review should take, only that it should be dominated by faculty and that the administrative opinion was less significant than faculty opinion. At that time, Bill Karns was LRCCD senate president and Mike was LRCFT president. Together they hammered out a concept and process for peer-review that still stands today in its original conception.

They saw peer-review as being about the improvement of instruction. He and Bill thought that peer-review should give faculty the opportunity to improve instruction; indeed, they did not envision peer-review as being punitive. They conceived of peer-review as being a sort of mandatory process where every three years a faculty member would meet with faculty colleagues and take a serious and rigorous look at her performance and see where the faculty member could improve her teaching.

They never saw it as a disciplinary tool or a means where individual, institutional or bureaucratic agendas could be forced upon the faculty members. They never saw it as a codification that had to be met to avoid a grievance.

Mike will be remembered by his family, his beloved wife Sissy, his many friends and colleagues, and his fellow parishioners at St. Anthony's Church where he was a long-time deacon. ■

# MICHAEL AS I KNEW HIM

By Robert Perrone

It was Thursday, August 23, 1990 when I first met Michael Crowley as he sat on a panel interviewing candidates for the position of LRCFT Executive Director. As I was in the middle of my interview, I looked over and saw Michael sitting there with his eyes closed. It appeared that he had fallen asleep, not a good sign when one is interviewing for a job. I was to find out later, from firsthand experience, that Michael often shut his eyes during meetings and, yes, sometimes he even nodded out. I learned not to take it personally.

From my first days in Sacramento as the new staff person for the LRCFT, Michael treated me as a member of his family. He made certain that my family and I were able to find adequate living arrangements and he arranged for the Union to pick up a large part of our moving expenses.

He had planned on serving as LRCFT president for two terms only but agreed to stay on in order to help me ease into my new position. In those first few months, Michael insisted on vetting everything I wrote before it became public, since, in my prior position there was a pronounced adversarial rela-

tionship between management and labor, and my writing tended to reflect that. He was patient and understanding as he helped me through that difficult transition from adversarial to collaborative.

I was incredibly impressed with Michael's broad fields of interest. He was well versed in history, an English professor, an expert photographer, a skilled boat builder, an avid bicyclist who also repaired his own bicycles (one of which he sold to me), and an excellent writer. For all the years of his presidency, his column was an eagerly awaited feature in the Union News [See why by reading reprint of one of those articles on page 12].

Even after Michael stepped down as president of LRCFT, he remained active, mentoring those who followed and holding the position of Union College President. And, he continued to treat me as a member of his family. Michael was a very religious man and he took the principles of his religion just as seriously; they guided him in everything he did.

I will always be grateful to him. Have a safe journey, Michael. ■

# I REMEMBER MICHAEL CROWLEY

By Lanny Hertzberg

I remember Michael Crowley. When I started working at Cosumnes River College, Michael Crowley was one of the first people I met. He approached me as a new teacher to encourage me to join the union. After I agreed to join he stayed to talk "just a little while." Michael's "just a little while" talks became one of the things I remember fondly and will miss the most.

Michael's first talk with me was on the culture of CRC; about how we were all there to help each other, how the student was the most important, how all of the staff was focused on success. I thought it a bit Pollyannaish at the time. I soon came to realize that this soft-spoken yet intense man did not deny that there were some things that needed fixing. Instead he felt if one did not recognize all the good, one could never correct the evil. Professor Crowley believed it was evil to allow one student to fail if he or she could have been helped. He felt that his mission was to create an environment where students could prosper, where teachers could inspire and

where the entire college staff would work together to make that happen.

His work on shared governance, reading across the curriculum and negotiations based on shared interests between staff and administration helped to create an atmosphere of trust and support. His students benefited immensely from the environment of mutual respect which he demanded in his classes. His storytelling ability was notorious. His Lincoln-esque wit and charm entranced his students in the classroom and helped defuse many potentially hostile union negotiation situations.

In sum, he was a very nice person who helped a lot of us to be better students, better teachers, better colleagues and better people. All of you who work or worked for Los Rios might take a minute to thank Michael Crowley. He would probably deny that he did anything special, but he would be wrong. He did a lot. Thank you Michael. ■

# DOUGHNUT FOR THE DEAN

By Michael Crowley

(The following is a reprint of the "President's Column" from the May 19, 1988 edition of the Union News)

Monday afternoon I was hiding in my office with the door locked and the phone unplugged. My plan was to get two more hours of uninterrupted time to finish correcting the compositions I had left from the weekend.

Everything was moving along until I began to get numb between the eyes and decided to slip over to the area office to see if there were a couple of left-over doughnuts to refreshen my sensibilities.

The doughnuts were gone, but I found a couple of those jam filled things that look like sweaty hamburger buns left in the greasy Winchell's box. Just as I finished the first one and reached for the second, Dr. Closet [Michael's parody administrator], my new dean, came in.

"Oh, Mike, I'm glad I found you. I've been wanting to talk to you."

"Well, er..., I was just going back to my office to finish my comps...."

"What's the matter? Weekend not long enough for you to get your work done? I just want to give you a little advice that will help the teachers. I understand that you've been talking to some of them about going back to the old division chair system."

"Well, I've been talking to a few who have been under both systems to see which one they thought was the most effective."

"What brought this on? You don't think I'm doing a good job?"

"oh, no, Dr. closet, you're one of the finest managers I know. I've just been reading a lot of things like

the Carnegie Reports that emphasize educational improvement by putting most of the academic decision-making in the hands of the teachers. They contend that teachers are professionals and must have control over their work, and..."

"Mike, those studies are just a lot of theoretical bunk, It wouldn't surprise me a bit to find out they're all probably funded by the teachers' unions. And if you keep spreading that kind of stuff around among the faculty, you just make them discontent. The teachers are the workers. The managers are the real professionals. A college is something like a hospital. The students are the patients and the teachers are the nurses. And the managers are the doctors who are the professionals and they make the decisions. They know what's good for the patient. And the nurses, or at least the good ones, carry out their orders exactly."

"Why, if it weren't for the managers, half the teachers wouldn't even show up for work and the half that did would go home before lunch," he concluded.

"But, Dr. Closet, when we elected our own division chairs from among the faculty, they were responsible to the faculty," I pointed out.

"Mike, you've got to understand that the reason this district is so strong is because the deans are not responsible to the teachers. They are responsible to the administrative chain of command. That's the way we make everyone accountable to the district office. And that's what makes the system work."

And then he grabbed the last jelly bun and took a huge bite out of it. Wiping the red goo from his chin with the back of his hand, he smiled and said, "Well, time to get back to your comps."

"Yeah, see you later."

In unity,  
Mike

# RESPICE FINEM

By William Karns

Mike Crowley was a wonderful teacher who led me--sometimes against my grain, I admit--to many lessons and insights in the years we taught, rode motorcycles, worked shared governance, talked, argued and built boats together. Others have and will describe with more precision and in more elegant detail how he served his students in the classrooms and his colleagues in the offices and meeting rooms of CRC and the District. But what I want to describe has to do with something else, with a beautiful, idiosyncratic form of patience, for want of a better word, that he clearly brought to his in-class teaching but that he also brought to the wider world of human relationships that surrounded us in school and in our families, a patience that for me remains an illumination, its own kind of touchstone, scripture, beatitude.

I think I first became aware of this patience when we were building boats. We were a study in contrasts: I wanted the boat, period; building it was what you had to do to get it. He wanted the boat, too, I think, but he knew how to be in the moment all the way from picking the design to carrying it to the water, working late into the night with such an intentional, perfect rhythm and a loving, unharried approach to the wood that I knew there was more to be learned from him than just spiling a complex shape or making a serviceable rabbit. He was always mindful of the greater purposes inherent in practicing the craft,

and he tried his best to help me see the larger values at hand.

But for me his most enduring lesson came before we were neighbors in the Pocket, when he was still living up in Newcastle, some forty-odd miles from CRC and beyond even his amazing bicycle reach. He usually commuted in one of his many ratty VW Rabbits, one of his kids, students at CRC, driving while he read or graded (yes, graded) compositions. On this particular occasion, as we were packing up to go our separate ways home, he mentioned in passing that he was mad at the particular kid driving that day about some small irksome thing, something long forgotten now. At any rate, I asked him the next day if he had had it out with the kid in question on the long drive home, as I might have. I have never forgotten his answer: "No, fifty miles is too far to go in anger." Meaning, I knew from his other lessons, that what might feel good or even like justice now might not in the end be the right thing to do, might not suit our real ends, being good and helpful to one another. As you may have done as well, I saw corollaries of this wisdom throughout his work with the Union and the District: his relationships and the brilliant way he handled them created our ability to have and nurture what we now call IBA and led to this generation of peace that has meant so much to all of us. He made our world a better place. ■



# BREAD AND ROSES ONE HUNDRED YEARS ON

By Andy Piascik

(In recognition of March as Women's History Month, we are printing this article celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Bread and Roses strike.)

One hundred years ago this month, in the depths of a brutal New England winter, the great Bread and Roses Strike began in Lawrence, Mass. Accounts differ as to whether a woman striker actually held a sign that read "We Want Bread and We Want Roses, Too," or whether that's a legend that has grown over time. No matter. It's a wonderful phrase, as appropriate for the Lawrence strikers as for any group at any time: the notion that, in addition to the necessities for survival, people should have "a sharing of life's glories," as James Oppenheim put it in his poem "Bread and Roses."

Though 100 years have passed, the Bread and Roses strike resonates as one of the most important in the history of the United States. Like many labor conflicts of the time, the strike of Lawrence's mill hands was marked by obscene disparities in wealth and power, open collusion between the state and business owners, large-scale violence against unarmed strikers, and great ingenuity and solidarity on the part of workers. In important ways, though, the Bread and Roses strike was also unique. It was the first large-scale industrial strike, the overwhelming majority of the strikers were immigrants, and most were women and children. For all of those reasons and more, the strike and the phrase that has always been associated with it hold a special place in the glorious history of our country's working people.

It is noteworthy that the Occupy movement shares many philosophical and strategic characteristics with the Lawrence strike—direct action, the prominent role of women, the centrality of class, participatory decision-making, egalitarianism, and an authentic belief in the principle that We Are All Leaders, to name just some. Facing conditions not so different from today, the have-nots of 1912 defeated the haves and in so doing provided us with both some possible historical lessons and inspiration that justice can triumph.

Lawrence's textile workers experienced most of the horrors that characterized early industrial labor. Workplace injuries and deaths were commonplace, six-day workweeks of 55-60 hours were the norm, and children as young as 10 worked full-time, deprived of schooling and any semblance of a childhood because families could not survive on the pay

of two adult wage-earners. It was a work environment, in short, that William Blake, writing about similar hellholes in England, captured perfectly with the phrase "these dark Satanic mills."

The conflict in Lawrence began on Jan. 11, 1912, when a group of Polish women employed at the Everett Cotton Mill walked off the job over a pay dispute. Disdained by the unions of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the mill hands immediately sought help from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and every mill in town was soon closed. Many strikers had experience with militant working class traditions in their native lands, experience the IWW, in contrast to the AFL, not only respected but cultivated. Committees of each of several dozen ethnic groups were formed and meetings, printed strike updates and speeches were translated into all of the major languages.

Perhaps the most important of the IWW's contributions were its emphasis on solidarity and its unshakable belief in the ability of the workers to do for themselves. Support from around the country proved invaluable, but it was the strikers who did the negotiating and made all the important decisions. Significantly, women were involved at every level and their leadership was absolutely crucial to victory.

It was women, for example, who moved to the front of many of the marches in an effort to curtail state violence against the strike (although the police and militia proved not at all shy about beating women and children as well as men). It was women who led the singing and spontaneous parading that were hallmarks of the strike. And it was women who decided to send children out of town to supportive families (including to Bridgeport) so they would be better cared for, a move that incurred the wrath of local officials and also drew national attention to the strike.

Through two bitterly cold months and despite two strikers killed, hundreds beaten and scores imprisoned, the workers achieved a settlement close to their original demands. Textile workers throughout New England soon won similar gains, as mill owners sought to avoid "more Lawrences." More

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broadly, the strike led to advances in the areas of workplace safety, minimum wage laws and child labor protections. Lawrence was also the first major industrial strike in the U.S. and the heroic efforts of those involved lay the foundation for the militant working class organizing of the 1930s.

In recent decades, Americans have suffered through the most radical upward redistribution of wealth in human history. That shift has been accomplished in large part by a vicious attack on the working class, including a concerted campaign to pit non-union workers against those in unions. The resulting race to the bottom has enriched the few and devastated millions of lives.

The ongoing global challenge to corporate tyranny gives hope that the tables are finally turning, and echoes of the Bread and Roses strike ring through that resistance as vibrantly as an Occupy drum circle. The Occupy movement also serves as an important counterpoint to a labor movement that for decades has more closely resembled the Textile Workers Union of 1912 than the IWW, one where union bureaucrats are as threatened by rank and file initiatives as any employer.

The totalitarian control of our economic life that corporate elites exercise has brought us to the brink of national (indeed, international) catastrophe, and collective resistance is as necessary as it was 100 years ago. As the 99 percent continues to challenge the super-rich, we will do well to celebrate and study the Lawrence strike of 1912. In so doing we can perhaps begin to create a world where everyone has both sufficient bread to eat and "life's glories" as vivid as the reddest roses.

Andy Piascik is a long-time activist and award-winning author who has written about working-class issues for *Z Magazine*, *The Independent*, *Union Democracy Review*, *Labor Notes* and other publications. Reach him at [andypiascik@yahoo.com](mailto:andypiascik@yahoo.com). ■

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discriminate (4.9.4). In other words, you can't single out a specific unit member for personal reasons or professional reasons that are not included in the contract as exceptions nor determine assignment for that member based on such reasons or based on criteria that were not applied equally. However, do not confuse discrimination with equality. You can schedule by seniority, by lottery, by systematic rotation or whatever combination of the aforementioned and/or other agreed upon processes that your division or department has chosen to apply to all. If your current process is causing numerous conflicts between unit members or complaints, however, your manager should be alerted as it may be necessary to reevaluate or amend it to maintain a collegial atmosphere. Union representatives trained in IBA can be called on to help moderate such conversations if departments or divisions are unable to do so on their own.

There are also many other protections that normally must be observed unless there is mutual consent between the unit member and management. Unfortunately, not all members are aware of such conditions and often accept assignments that they did not realize they could refuse. For example, did you know that you do not normally have to accept being assigned more than three different courses concurrently (4.4.1)? Were you aware that there are limits on distance or online instruction or that you may only hold a maximum of two online office hours in place of on campus hours per semester (4.7.2.2.1)? Have you heard that full-time counselors should have ten hours of professional development per week excluding peak periods (4.8.3.2)? Were you told that assignments on Sundays are by mutual consent only and that assignments on Saturdays should attempt to accommodate religious convictions and/or observances (4.7.2.5 and 4.8.4.1-2)? Did anyone communicate to you that preference will be used for staffing summer courses; however, for adjuncts summer term is not counted as a semester for purposes of obtaining preference priority (4.10.6.2)? To get a complete picture of what you may opt to consent to or not and in what special situations you may be assigned without consent, you should read more under your job heading in Article 4, available at [www.lrcft.org](http://www.lrcft.org).

Stay tuned for Round Two: Sticky Staffing Situations for more specific information based on recently reported disputes and queries. Don't worry, the farming analogy ends with round one. ■

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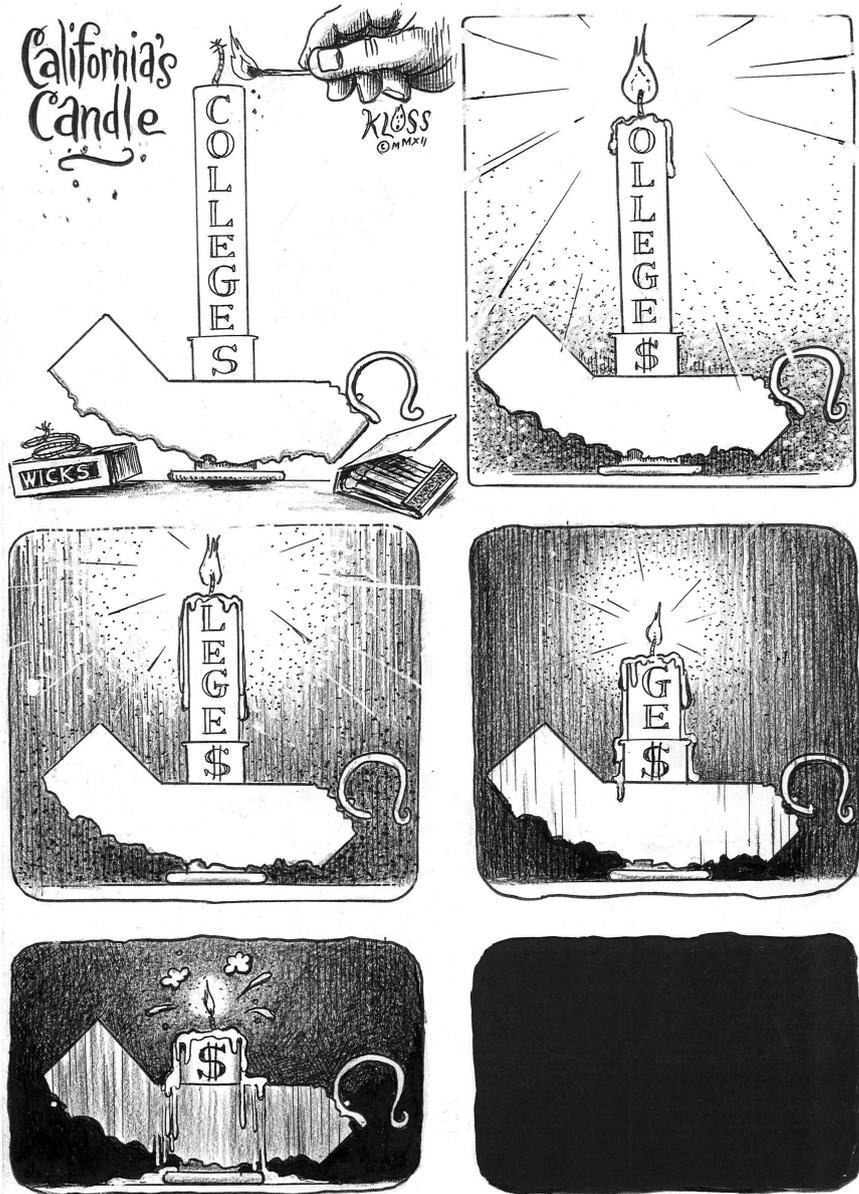
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