



Membership Meeting  
Thursday, May 9, 2011, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
Room 5401, Cuesta College

### **Approved Minutes**

*Present:* About 20 members. Shannon Willson, CFT Field Representative, attended the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Allison Merzon, CCFT President.

Merzon opened the meeting by describing the process for ratification of the proposed 2008-2011 contract ("Collective Bargaining Agreement" – CBA). CCFT has been waiting for a final copy of the proposed contract from the district, but each copy from the district has unauthorized or un-negotiated changes in it that need to be resolved before it can be presented to the faculty. Merzon received another "final" proposal today, and she will assign various CCFT Executive Board and CCFT members to compare it with the original contract, Tentative Agreements, and Memorandums of Understanding to ensure that it is accurate.

The Elections Committee will be sending out contract ratification ballots this week through inter-campus mail. The contract will be posted on the CCFT web site and paper copies will be available in division offices and in the mailrooms of the North County Campus and South County Center. Ballots will be due on Tuesday, May 24, 2011. Only CCFT members are allowed to vote for contract ratifications. Merzon noted that the contract ratification election will be postponed if there are too many errors in the current district-proposed contract.

Merzon reported that negotiations for next year cannot begin until the current year is "closed out" (the contract is ratified). The district appears to want to negotiate salary cuts and/or furloughs for next year. Many classified staff reductions are listed in the Board of Trustees May 11, 2011 agenda packet. The district is "sunshining" (opening) Articles 4, 5, and 7 for negotiations. A tentative budget should be approved by the Board of Trustees in June, so the district administrators are anxious to begin negotiations.

A long and confidential discussion was held regarding various options for responding to the district's perceived budget crisis. It was noted that the district administration has made many poor financial choices in the recent past, leading to a major "structural" (locally-caused) budget deficit of over \$1,000,000. The district would only be about \$200,000 in the red if we had only state budget cuts with which to deal and if we used available local financial resources. It was noted that Cuesta College has received \$6.98 million in contingency funds over the past few years, but there is only \$3.3 million left in it. None of the spent money has been accounted for in Cuesta budgets.

CCFT has been asking for many months for accurate financial data from the district but has received very little of it, particularly a list of all the options that could be used for budget reductions and why some were utilized and others were not. Merzon reiterated CCFT's position that we will only bargain from a position of having accurate and comprehensive financial data.

It was noted that CCFT is a "wall-to-wall unit," i.e., CCFT represents full-time and part-time faculty as a whole unit. It is a fallacy to expect that all members of the unit must take a salary reduction or other cut, particularly since all unit members have already been "hit" with a loss of courses (and hence, salary) or extra workload from division faculty and staff reductions. Asking all members to take a salary cut would be a double hit for many, if not most, of the faculty, and the faculty, as a unit, has contributed the most to solving the district's budget problems through course cuts.

Current cuts to part-time courses and full-time overloads represent about \$700,000 in salary losses from the faculty (and subsequent savings to the district). Cuts from Summer 2010 courses equaled the same amount of dollars as an across-the-board faculty pay cut of 4.3% in salary.

Merzon reported that of the 18 faculty retirees that we have incurred in the past two years, only two positions are currently being rehired. This represents a savings of about \$368,000 to the district and a greater workload to all faculty in those divisions that will not see the positions filled. Overall, the faculty, as a unit, has contributed this year about \$568,000 in salary savings to the district.

It was pointed out that the classified staff do not have the same bargaining options as do faculty. For example, their positions can be reduced or eliminated with a 45-day notice, while part-time faculty are hired by the semester and full-time faculty positions can only be eliminated if a program is discontinued or reduced. Faculty members need to be sensitive to the great stress that the classified staff is undergoing right now. This is not to diminish the great stress that many part-time faculty members are undergoing right now, as well, with losing classes and salary.

Some members noted that the district continues to fund building projects, even though faculty and staff are being laid off and both old and new buildings are inadequately staffed. Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) were designed for salary increases (to help offset inflationary increases) but are used instead by the administrators to fund buildings. In addition, the district received growth funds last year, but it was not applied to growth in courses or student access, as it was intended.

Merzon received many kudos for her diligent and insightful work on the state and district budgets. Conversely, given the history at Cuesta College, there were some members that expressed a lack of confidence regarding some administrator's ability to make competent financial and planning decisions.

Merzon reported that the district is looking to cut about 300 sections in the Fall 2011 semester, although that initial figure might be high. The large amount of course cancellations that occurred in the Fall 2010 semester means fewer course cuts that might have to be made in Fall 2011, although the district might need to cut more in the Spring 2012 semester.

It is premature to discuss salary cuts, given the fact that the state budget is not set yet and CCFT does not have accurate data regarding the local financial picture. Likewise, it was noted that, using Gil Stork's analogy, Cuesta College faculty are not going to take a pay cut to pay off Cuesta College's "credit card," i.e., a local deficit that is based on poor choices by administrators with no prospect of being resolved (including massive buyouts of previous administrators' contracts, even after they were fired). Also, it was noted that Cuesta College faculty are already near the bottom of the list of comparable districts for salary and for fringe benefits.

Shannon Willson reported that some districts appear to have implemented furloughs, although there are many questions about how it was done. She noted that furloughs must go on salary schedules as a salary reduction and not as a reduction in full-time load, or else STRS will not credit a faculty member for a full year. Some Nursing/Allied Health faculty members wondered how furloughs could be implemented when a certain number of days and hours of time is mandated for their programs.

The district has refused to renew the Part-Time Faculty Bumping Rights MOU, despite it being used only a handful of times this academic year and how it gives a small bit of assistance to the part-time faculty in these stressful budget times. Likewise, it was noted that the district refuses to implement an across-the-board hiring freeze, instead continuing to hire new managers.

Merzon distributed cards for members to write comments on regarding various negotiation options and for joining an off-campus email distribution list.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Minutes respectively submitted by Mark Tomes.

Next EB meeting: Thursday, May 17, 2011, 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. or so, Big Sky Café, SLO

Next Council of Reps meeting: Thursday, May 12, 2011, 3:00 - 4:45 p.m.