



# READ ON

Los Angeles College  
Faculty Guild  
Local 1521

WWW.AFT1521.ORG

Volume 39 No. 9

May 2011

## Budget Impasse: What Each of Us Can Do

**A**s the budget impasse drags on in Sacramento, the Guild has been actively mobilizing to make our elected representatives pay attention to the dire situation facing all of us.

With Governor Brown's budget, community colleges are taking a \$400 million hit. If the tax extensions are not approved, an 'all cuts' budget will be much worse. "We're not going to sit back and take more," says Guild president Joanne Waddell. "If our state leaders do not seriously move to increase revenues, we're facing a difficult future."

These are some of the actions we have taken recently:

- A delegation of Guild leaders – John McDowell, Carl Friedlander, Joanne Waddell, Zack Knorr – joined Board of Trustees member Miguel Santiago, lobbyist Patrick McCallum, Chancellor Daniel LaVista, and student intern Marcos Perez, for a meeting with Assembly Speaker John Pérez.
- On FACCC Lobby Day a delegation of Guild leaders – Zack Knorr, Carl Friedlander, Kathleen Yasuda, and John McDowell, along with 8 of our student interns – conducted 24 visits with 17 state legislators representing part or all of the LACCD.
- Our student interns organized a Ramen-In protest at the governor's office in Los Angeles, with 200 students from all of our colleges delivering \$300 worth of ramen noodles to symbolize the impact of the fee increase.
- Students have visited legislators and held town halls on the campuses, including a Die-In at Valley College to protest the death of public education and the loss of summer school.
- Guild activists Tim Gilmore (Mission) and Renee Berg and Michael Powelson (Valley) joined Guild president Joanne Waddell on CFT Lobby Day in Sacramento.
- Guild leaders met with Assemblymember Warren Furutani to discuss pension reform and ensure that our voice is heard on any moves to change STRS.
- Sharon Hendricks and Carolyn Widener have represented the Guild at recent meetings of the LA Trustees Roundup, a group working on pension issues.

"We've been extraordinarily busy on a state

level," comments Waddell. "It's up to all of us to continue putting pressure on our legislators on the local level. Instead of just talking to our Democratic 'friends,' we are urging faculty who live in districts with Republican legislators to visit and call these elected representatives. Our message is clear: 'Let the people of California vote on the tax extensions.'"

Here are some key talking points:

- Community colleges are the point of access for most Californians to get a college education.
- Community colleges are the key to our state's economic recovery.
- Our system cannot be expected to absorb additional cuts and still deliver services.
- Don't raise fees higher than next year's increase of \$10 per unit.

"We are all educators, and advocacy is really just a form of education," says Guild Political Director John McDowell. "We can join with our students to teach legislators and the public how important our colleges are to Californians and our economy. No one can make our case better than we can, and even if you've never done any advocacy before, this is the time to do it!"

### 3 Down, 1 to Go in Board of Trustees Race

■ Help Elect Community College Advocate Scott Svonkin

**G**uild members' efforts in the March election helped to ensure a victory for three of our Guild-endorsed candidates to the LACCD Board of Trustees – Mona Field, Miguel Santiago, and Steven Veres. Thanks to everyone who helped in some way with calls, post cards, contributions to COPE, or telling others about our candidates.

We need you again! We are facing a critical run-off election on May 17 to put our fourth endorsed candidate, Scott Svonkin, on the Board.

Your friends and neighbors trust your advice on what's best for community colleges in Los Angeles – so we need you to spread the word about Scott.

"Scott is fearless and will do the right thing when it comes to our bond program," says John McDowell, Guild Political Director. "He's a solid pro-labor candidate and will be an excellent board member. He's definitely on our side." It's crucial to have a majority Board that understands the pivotal role faculty play in the success of our students and knows our issues.

"We know from past experience that our participation in the campaign can make the winning difference, particularly in Trustee elections," says McDowell. "For most voters in Los Angeles, this race is the only one on the ballot. With such a low turnout election it is vital that each and every one of us vote for Scott and urge our friends, relatives, and neighbors to do the same."

- Contribute to our COPE fund.
- Please join us for phonebanking between now and Election Day. Call the Guild for more information.
- Sign the Dear Friend cards you have received in the mail and put them in your neighbors' mailboxes.
- Email everyone in your personal email address book.
- Post your endorsement on your Facebook page.
- Contact your chapter president for more Dear Friend cards.

**We can win if we pull together!**



Scott Svonkin

## President's Message

### Get Loud

**W**hen we like something – say, at a concert or sporting event – we get loud. We make some noise.

When we don't like something – say, at a speech given by a politician we don't agree with – we get loud. We make some noise.

When there is danger – say, a child is about to run into a busy street – we get loud. We make some noise.

Right now there are things going on that we like – successful Board of Trustee elections and a re-energizing of the labor movement. There are things going on that we don't like – snarky attacks on public employees, pension envy. And, there are things going on that may be dangerous – attempts to privatize public higher education in the name of "budget creativity." In each case, we need to get loud. We need to make some noise.

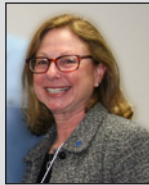
There are lots of ways to get loud, to make some noise:

- We can join with our brothers and sisters in CFT for our Education Week of Action May 9-13 to send a message to the people of California and our legislators that the education community won't stay silent in the face of massive budget cuts to education and vital services. (Watch your emails for opportunities to participate.)
- We can call on State Legislators and tell them not to make further cuts to community colleges, and that if they are serious about solving California's budget problems they need to listen to Californians who, according to the latest PPIC poll, are courageous enough to raise revenues – through a "1% on the 1%" tax and an oil severance tax. (Have you called your legislators this week?)
- We can talk to our friends, family, and neighbors about electing Scott Svonkin to the LACCD Board of Trustees, where he will join other AFT-endorsed candidates recently elected. (And you can join Guild members who are mailing Dear Friend cards, sending emails, and phone banking!)

Getting loud and making some noise is not about the decibels. It's about persistence. It's about delivering our message every day in multiple ways.

- On our campuses – get loud! – and impact campus budget decisions.
- In our communities – get loud! – and remind our families, friends, and neighbors that community colleges are the cog in the wheel that can get California's economy rolling again.
- In the voting booth on May 17 (or earlier if you vote by mail) - get loud! – and be part of the estimated 5% of the electorate who will determine the direction of our Board of Trustees.

Find a way – your way – to get loud! And make some noise – today!



## New Briefs

### AFT 1521 Representatives Attend Higher Ed Conference



Guild delegates at the AFT National Higher Education Issues Conference, "Our Work, Our Union: Making a Difference for Students Every Day," in Philadelphia April 1-3 stand strong with Randi Weingarten, National AFT President, after she urged the gathering of higher education union activists from around the country to take a "We Are One" pledge to fight attacks on our rights and values.

### Guild Efforts on Ed Code Permits Save 68 Faculty Jobs

**T**hanks to the tireless efforts of Guild leaders, 68 of our long-time instructors, who had been informed that they were no longer qualified to teach in the district, will be allowed to continue in their employment. These faculty members were hired prior to 1990, when Ed Code allowed districts to grant permits – renewable annually – to faculty they considered qualified to teach in a discipline based on transcripts for courses taken in that field. (After 1990, the provisions of AB1725 went into effect, establishing current minimum qualifications which require a Masters degree in one's subject field.)

Suddenly last summer, administrators at two of our colleges decided to deny the renewal of their faculty's permits. After being notified by district HR that they would be denied classes, these instructors went to their chapter presidents and grievance reps for help. "This took courage on their part to come forward and say this was not right," says Guild president Joanne Waddell. "It was certainly perplexing to wonder why, after more than 20 years, they were not qualified to teach anymore. These instructors were unfairly denied assignments and wages for no legitimate reason."

After the permit issue was brought to the district's attention, HR sent letters to all of the 68 permit holders right before Christmas informing them that they were no longer eligible to teach and had until mid-January to supply transcripts. Waddell, working with the campuses' Guild reps and Chief Grievance Officer Darrell Eckersley, enlisted the help of the District Academic Senate. DAS officers Kathleen Bimber and Eloise Crippens painstakingly reviewed files pulled by District HR to see if faculty met current MQs or were eligible for equivalency, working to meet the spring semester's 10-week deadline for making fall assignments.

The Guild also worked with Vice Chancellor Adriana Barrera and the LACCD General Counsel Camille Goulet, who provided

appropriate legal guidance based on Ed Code. Eventually, about one-third of the faculty were able to provide proof they met MQs, one-third were approved for equivalency, and one-third were 'grandparented' as fully meeting the requirements, thanks to an agreement worked out between the DAS and the district. The 68 faculty are now cleared for scheduling and eligible to teach. "This was a good example of senate-union collaboration which led to a positive outcome for our members," says Waddell.

"With determination and focus, our chapter presidents, grievance reps, and Guild president never let go of what became a union battle for instructors' rights," says Eckersley. "All involved put a lot of effort into resolving this problem."

### 10th Annual Guild Retirement Benefit Resources on the Web

Over 350 Guild members attended the Guild's 10th Annual Retirement and Benefits Conference in Manhattan Beach in March. The workshops and general session provided a wealth of valuable information for faculty at all stages of their careers. Check out the sessions posted on the Guild website, [www.aft1521.org](http://www.aft1521.org) – Financial Planning for Your Future (Kathy Daruty, Pierce) and presentations on the Affordable Health Care Act and the CalSTRS Investment Portfolio.

### Read On

The newsletter of the  
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Submissions welcome. Deadline is the 10th of each month. Please include a daytime or evening phone number.

### Coming Soon

Education Week of Action  
May 9-13  
Stay tuned for details

# Guild Members Travel to Wisconsin to Join Protest, Get Inspired

When Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker set out to strip that state's public workers of their right to collective bargaining, he set off a firestorm of protests that galvanized the labor movement. Around the country, union members and supporters alike have taken to the streets, rallying to defend union rights and highlight the important role unions play in protecting the middle class.

At ground zero, Wisconsin has witnessed some of the largest outpouring of support since the Vietnam War, with more than 100,000 union members and supporters taking over the Capitol building in late February to protest Walker's union-bashing bill.

In an act of solidarity, the LA Federation of Labor chartered a plane in the early days of the takeover, inviting 160 activists from 40 different unions to go to Madison to show their support. Three Guild members plus a community college activist – one of our own student interns – were among them.

For each of them, Wisconsin was an inspirational and transformational moment. Something much larger than themselves was occurring there.

"Walking into the rotunda with the LA County Federation that first day with thousands of people camped out, cheering and drum-

ming was a goose-bump experience I'll always remember," says Guild President Joanne Waddell. "People were crying. They couldn't believe we came all the way from LA to support them. There was such a sense of solidarity. Everyone was there for the cause." Waddell says there's a much bigger issue out there – the attack on all unions. "If we lose in Wisconsin and other states, it will spread."

She is particularly troubled by the attacks on education and on teachers. "There's nothing sacrosanct anymore – not even education. Our Republican politicians will sell us out. And we will be haunted by the consequences of these decisions for decades to come."

Student intern Marcos Perez agrees. "Wisconsin was an attack on our democracy as we know it," he says. "As someone who wants to teach at a community college... I can't think of anything better than to physically be here in Madison to help in any way I can," he wrote in his blog from the capitol.

For Alice Taylor, a full-time art history faculty member at West, the trip to Wisconsin not only gave her hope, it clarified the dividing lines occurring in the nation today: "Wisconsin was a lesson on what reasonable people can do when they get together – and do it right. Teachers really held the line in Madison. That really

empowered me."

Adjunct instructor in Child Development at Valley College, Renee Berg, took part in the historic rallies, she said, in part to help protect American values. "Madison was all about democracy in action. Those people were using their voice for a better America."

Now, for the hard part. "How can we take this moment and turn it into a movement?" asks Waddell. "How do we energize and mobilize ourselves? Wisconsin has given us the best opportunity in 30 years to re-energize and rebuild our movement. I think we will seize it. But nobody can sit this one out."



Three Guild members joined trade unionists from Los Angeles for the three-day trip to Wisconsin to show support for workers there.

# Students Dying to Get Message Out on Dire Impact of Budget Cuts

More than 80 LA Valley College students gathered March 30 on the campus main square to protest the death of public education with a very public "die-in."

Under a beautiful 85-degree sky, dozens of students at a time took turns playing dead on a grassy section of Monarch Square, each holding up a tombstone to symbolize the drastic effects to education California is facing in the wake of deep budget cuts.

"RIP My Education," "RIP Hope for Transfer," "RIP Small Class Size," "Here Lies Children's Futures," the signs read.

"This die-in symbolizes the death of all the hopes and dreams of all the students who want to transfer and who want to graduate on time," said event organizer Marcos Perez, a 1521 student intern. Perez is also part of Valley's Political Action Coalition.

California's community colleges have braced for millions in cuts already approved by Gov. Jerry Brown and the legislature. Hundreds of classes are being slashed, while costs to students continue to rise. A \$10 per unit fee increase recently passed, raising costs to \$36 per unit this fall.

Colleges in the Cal State and the University of California system are also facing similar cuts.

Valley student Michelle Cohen will be transferring to a 4-year public institution in the fall, but

said the effects of the budget cuts will follow her. "It's not just community colleges that are suffering," she said. "Lawmakers are cutting millions from the UC's as well."

According to Perez, the current cuts are the best-case-scenario. Gov. Brown has been wrangling with Republicans in the state legislature to agree to a vote in June on tax increases aimed at defraying cuts to public education, but talks have stalled. If Brown's tax proposals don't clear the legislature and make it onto the ballot in November, or get voted down by voters, even deeper cuts will be implemented.

"The worst case scenario would mean at least \$700 million in cuts to community colleges. And fee increases as much as \$66 per unit," explained Perez in what he calls a "doomsday scenario for community colleges."

According to AFT student intern coordinator Zack Knorr, the reference to death is not mere hyperbole. "The budget cuts and increases literally are destroying public education in this state and we want to send the message that this is real to community college students."

According to Knorr, students are becoming more conscious to the threat to their education.

"Getting 80 students out to an event like this is a big deal," added Knorr. He also pointed out that

over 200 students and supporters turned out for a "Ramen Rally" at Jerry Brown's office the previous month, and that the student intern program would be bringing state legislators to campuses later in the semester to discuss the budget cuts and their impact on students.

"This is something that's growing and is going to get bigger across the state as the effects of the budget cuts become real to students."



## Governor's Pension Reform Proposal Would Impact Educators

By Sharon Hendricks, Retirement Liaison

Several days after budget talks broke down, Gov. Brown released a proposal for pension reform that would affect local and state pension systems. Included in the governor's proposal of seven reforms are two that would impact community college faculty:

1. Eliminate Purchase of Airtime. This would eliminate the opportunity for all current and future employee members of state and local retirement systems to purchase additional retirement service credit.

2. Prohibit Pension Spiking: Three-Year Final Compensation. Final compensation for new employees would be defined as the highest average annual compensation during a consecutive 36-month period.

Elements of the proposal that would affect other public employees include prohibiting the following: suspension of employer and/or employee contributions, employers from making employee pension contributions, retroactive pension increases, pension spiking (by defining compensation as only regular, non-recurring pay), and payments of pension benefits to anyone who commits a felony related to their employment.

There are several proposals under development:

- Impose a pension benefit cap
- Improve retirement board governance
- Limit post-retirement public employment
- Offer a hybrid option

- Address CalSTRS' unfunded liability

Gov. Brown did not give details regarding the proposals under development, but I will keep you posted as I hear more details. Republicans did release a statement indicating that they were willing to work with Gov. Brown on California pension reform and agreed with much of the Governor's proposal. However, Republicans want to see a mandatory hybrid system (not voluntary), increased employee contributions, and a two-thirds vote in the legislature on pension benefit changes in the future.

Several union leaders, including Dave Low from Californians for Health Care and Retirement Security, are opposed to the pension cuts proposed by Brown, stating that public employees have already made pension reductions in the last two years to save state funds.

### CalSTRS Teachers' Retirement Board Election

As our Guild's own Carolyn Widener retires from the board at the end of this year, I will run for the community college representative seat left open. I am excited about this new opportunity to serve all part-time and full-time faculty as well as K-12 teachers in the CalSTRS system. I have received endorsements from AFT, CFT, and CCCI. If you are interested in supporting my campaign, please email me at sharon4strs@att.net or check my website: [www.sharon4strs.com](http://www.sharon4strs.com)

## Adjunct Faculty News

### Working Together to Keep Adjuncts in the Classroom

By Phyllis Eckler and Kathy Holland

Co-chairs Adjunct Issues Committee

#### Budget Woes – What Can We Do?

The community college budget picture is looking bleaker by the week. The state has already voted on a 5% cut to community colleges, declaring a "workload reduction" that lowers the number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) it is willing to fund.

In response, districts cut classes. Our District Budget Committee is discussing reducing the \$25.76 million budget shortfall by cutting hourly assignments by \$8 million for 2011-12. Most of the FTES funding goes to fulfill the district's obligation to provide a full teaching load to contract (full-time) faculty. Once their load is assigned, extra hourly assignments can go to adjunct faculty and/or full-time faculty on the seniority lists; after that, department chairs can assign any extra courses as they wish.

Be sure that full-time faculty in your department know about the Guild's MOU stating that if a full-time faculty member gives up an hourly assignment that is then given to an adjunct instructor, it does not count as a refusal on the seniority list. Since cuts in class assignments can prevent adjunct faculty from qualifying for the district health benefits program, be sure to let your department chair know if this impacts you.

Tell your shared governance bodies to urge the colleges to cut back intersessions in favor of increased course offerings for fall and spring. When we use some of our funded FTES during intersessions, there can be huge cuts in classes the following semester.

Adjunct faculty are called "temporary" employees, yet many of us have been teaching for the district for 20 years or more. Class cuts in spring 2009 thinned our ranks so that, in some colleges' departments, only the most senior part-timers remain. Now it looks as if it will again be adjunct faculty who will be hit with diminished earnings, loss of health benefits, and in some cases, the complete loss of assignments.

If we can encourage full-time faculty to give up extra hourly assignments and urge our colleges to keep intersessions to a reasonable size, we may be able to retain the experienced cadre of adjunct faculty that has been devoted to serving the district for years.

#### If the Worst Happens...Be Prepared

The Guild's Adjunct Issues Committee will be offering an unemployment workshop on Saturday, June 4 from 10 am to noon in the cafeteria at Valley College. There will be presentations on filing for unemployment benefits, applying for COBRA health coverage, seniority rights under our contract, and other issues. No RSVP is necessary. Adjunct faculty from all of our colleges are welcome.

### Summary of Executive Board Motions

#### February 15, 2011

- Approve a resolution for the CFT Convention on Building Power through Classified and Faculty Unity
- Direct our members on the DBC to support a motion to send the \$11 million in growth money to the colleges immediately
- Support Los Angeles City Charter Amendment L
- Endorse Ted Lieu for State Senate District 28 and contribute \$1,000 to his campaign
- Support the County Fed COPE endorsed candidates with the exception of LAUSD Seat #7 and the CalPERS Board
- Approve the Good & Welfare Committee's request to add the Collective Bargaining Institute to the list of organizations receiving annual contributions (\$500); commend the committee for its work
- Approve the initial proposal for 2011-14 negotiations, with noted corrections
- Contribute \$500 to the LA Area Pension Trustees Network

#### March 15, 2011

- Contribute \$3,900 to Sharon Hendricks' campaign for CalSTRS Board
- Contribute \$2,500 to the L.A. County Democratic Party
- Donate \$500 to the CSUN Labor, Social, and Environmental Justice Fair at Cal State Dominguez Hills
- Approve a motion expressing our support for legislation or administrative action to uphold the collective bargaining rights of workers in Wisconsin
- Extend for two more years the MOU that specifies that when a full-time faculty member gives up an adjunct rate assignment, resulting in an adjunct not losing a class, it will not count as a refusal on the seniority list
- Modify Article 16.B.2 to add Pierce College to the colleges with seniority lists in Supervised Learning Assistance, Learning Skills English, and Learning Skills Math