



California Faculty Association

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Dear Colleague,

In October, the California Faculty Association held its semi-annual Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to report to you on some of the decisions made there and describe some of our recent accomplishments.

Faculty members representing all 23 CSU campuses gather at CFA Assemblies. This was one of our largest with 116 delegates who engaged in serious discussion about the challenges before all of us—faculty, students, and staff.

One year ago, at our Fall 2006 Assembly, we focused our attention on winning a fair contract for the faculty that would help us to provide quality education for our students and earn enough to support our families.

We won our contract by building enough power to make it harder for the administration to say no than to say yes. And we won by having enough funding to resource our plans; by the time we settled our contract we had spent \$1.5 million. All of us feel that it was an investment that truly paid off.

Power & Resources

The lesson we must take from the experience is that *if we want to achieve our goals we must have enough power and enough resources to do so*. And so we asked the delegates at the CFA Assembly, after winning the best contract in our organization's history, what should be the next steps for our union? And, how can we be sure to have the resources we would need to accomplish our goals?

The goals that the CFA Assembly adopted (see enclosed document) reflect many conversations with the faculty through our campus CFA chapters and at our statewide meetings. The campus meetings this Fall revealed general agreement that there remain issues left unresolved by the contract victory; among these are funding for the CSU, faculty workload and CSU Trustee accountability.

Having reached consensus on our goals, the delegates turned their attention to how to fund the work we would need to do to achieve our goals.

Clearly, many of our goals address the huge negative trends plaguing higher education across the country. And many of the things in our goals document are also big-ticket items.

On tenure-track hiring, for example, the cost of ACR 73, which is a state Assembly resolution to move the CSU toward a 75% tenure track to 25% lecturer ratio (without affecting incumbent lecturers) would, in the first year, be upwards of \$38 million.

Workload is another very important and very expensive issue to address. We know we teach more courses than other comparable systems; to fix that situation would cost real money. Reducing each faculty member's teaching load by just one WTU would cost in the range of \$32 million dollars. To reduce everyone's teaching load by one course would cost roughly \$130 million.

Just these two examples tell us that making proposals about these issues at the bargaining table will never be enough to win them. We will need much more political power, public support, and organizational capacity to make real headway toward achieving our goals. The reality is that building more political power, public support, and organizational capacity will cost money.

These facts were clear to all of the delegates: our goals are ambitious. We do not presently have the money to REALLY have a shot at achieving them. We must either trim our ambition or increase our resources. That was the choice that faced the CFA Assembly delegates.

Everyone agreed that we do not want to give up our goals and so the Assembly passed a two-part program to address our need for the resources to build for the next phase of CFA's growth. That program, endorsed by the CFA Board of Directors, includes a political action dues increase and an alteration to the system of collecting "fair share" fees.

Political Action Dues

CFA may never be as big as the California Teachers' Association or the prison guards union, but we play on the same field in Sacramento. For many reasons, the CSU's funding is one of the most vulnerable parts of the state budget. We don't have the constitutional protections that K-14 enjoys or (at least for now) the public support that funds prisons.

We must have the resources to make a difference in the election of candidates who will stick with us in our funding fights. We need more elected officials in Sacramento who will stand with CFA in future contract fights. We need to be able to find more of our own colleagues to run for office, and we need to be able to fund them so they can win.

We also frequently have to engage in the world of initiatives. We anticipate that initiatives we need to support and those we need to oppose will continue to come our way. The work of supporting or fighting initiatives does not come cheaply. It took thousands of dollars to help defeat the special election in 2005 and thousands to elect CSU faculty member George Diehr to the CalPERS Board.

Additionally, CFA members often encourage us to do an initiative on behalf of the CSU. In fact, it costs over \$1.5 million just to qualify an initiative for the ballot—not to mention the cost of the campaign to win. We also would like to help to elect a CSU champion to state office.

The reality is that our current level of Political Action (PAC) funding is simply not sufficient for CFA to build the political power and support we know we need. Furthermore, what we ask *our* members to pay is far less than many unions who are real players ask *their* members to pay.

At this Fall CFA Assembly, the delegates passed a motion to increase the PAC contribution from \$6 to \$10 per month for members earning \$2000 or more per month and from \$3 to \$5 for those earning less than \$2000 per month beginning in December 2007.

The second item will not affect CFA members. The delegates decided to alter the system for collecting “Fair Share” fees from non-CFA-members. While the law requires these fees for only a limited number of CFA’s activities, our work over the last decade demonstrates that all faculty benefit from far more than the minimum established by statute.

For example, although CFA spends a great deal of time and money carrying out lobbying efforts on behalf of the CSU budget, only the membership provides the resources. This summer, when we had to jump into high gear to prevent 1% from being cut from the CSU funding “compact,” no fee-payer dollars could be used for that activity. Clearly, members and non-members alike benefited from our successful efforts in the state capitol to save the CSU budget; yet only member dollars could finance the work.

Another example is work CFA does fighting off efforts to attack our pensions—e.g. the 2005 special election and the anticipated Richmond Initiative. All the work that we do to protect everyone’s retirement is financed solely by member dollars.

The new formula will make Fair Share Fees equal to normal membership dues unless an individual chooses to “opt out” and pay only the minimum required. This is the standard practice in nearly every other public employee union and certainly all professional unions including the California Teachers Association; American Federation of Teachers; American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees; California School Employees Association; California Professional Firefighters 55; and Academic Professionals of California.

Rest assured that our new practice will conform to all legal requirements that have been established over many years. Every non-CFA-member will be notified of the change at the beginning of the year and provided with instructions on how to join CFA or how to “opt-out” of the new fee arrangement.

The delegates of the Fall 2006 Assembly took important steps toward building CFA power. They set ambitious goals that will help us take on local campus issues, system-wide challenges, and larger national trends. They did not shrink from the responsibility to fund the plans that will help us to achieve our goals. The unity that helped us win our best contract ever will now help us build a union that will be a powerhouse in the state and in the nation.

In Union,

Lillian Taiz
President, California Faculty Association