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The FA Newsletter

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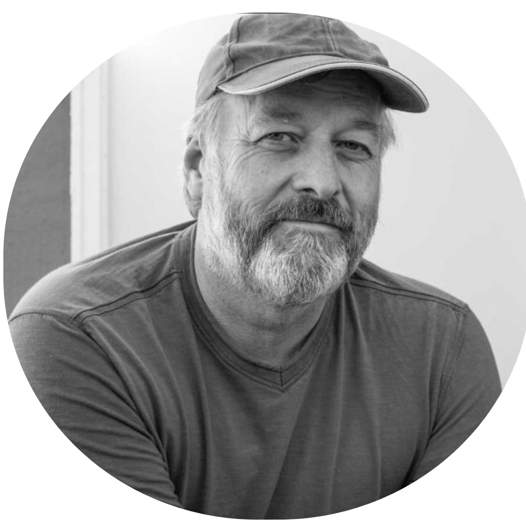
FA NEWS

FOOTHILL - DE ANZA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

FAFHDA: We've Got Your Back



Budgetequity

an FA article by

Tim Shively, President FHDA Faculty Association

In his review of Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Race,* novelist Hari Kunzru invokes the "new civil rights movement" and notes that "many companies and institutions are beginning to feel that by ignoring it they are exposing themselves to liability, or failing to get the best performance from their workforce." Tying this back to the "self actualization" model of equity that he claims DiAngelo advances, Kunzru notes that "there is a worrying focus on representation within existing structures of power, as if the point were to make a world in which, say, the percentage of Black prison officers exactly matched the percentage of Black people in the population, rather than asking what prison is for and whether it should exist." This incongruity between the message disseminated and the system from which it emanates is a relevant metric for any institution, but particularly for systems of higher ed. Our own District's recent and frequent invocations of equity, while praiseworthy on the surface, shroud more inequitable budgetary priorities which need to be acknowledged and addressed.

Budget and equity are increasingly intertwined in our District as the funding of programs dedicated to the success of marginalized students is considered relative to both the District's typical operational needs and an assumed future reduction of state funding. Most recently their intertwining has taken place against the backdrop of an unprecedented demand for classes (over 15% from a year ago at one point during the summer) and an inexplicably correlative reduction in class offerings, which resulted in District enrollment coming in barely flat (-0.5%) as of Census day. In its zest to pursue Basic Aid funding (an underlying imperative which was not publicly acknowledged at the time) relative to the Governor's May revise budget, our District has been chasing productivity (i.e. minimizing the cost of instruction by enrolling as many students as possible in the same number of sections rather than opening additional sections in the areas which need them) rather than chasing enrollment, and losing the opportunity to capitalize upon the increased demand for classes in the process. In fact, at present, productivity is the *only* number which is up District-wide: 2.9%, or 520 compared to last year's 505. Unfortunately, higher productivity does nothing to advance equity. And equity is an honorable goal.

In fact, the prioritization of fiscal matters over *people's* needs has negative equity implications for a supposed open-access institution, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of shrinking enrollment around the state. Students wanted to enroll in classes at *our* institution, a potential reversal of the trend of the last few years in which many opted to stick with their surrounding home Districts, most of which are Basic Aid. And now we've effectively turned many of them away, a disservice which may come back to bite us in Winter quarter. Our "hold harmless" status relative to the Student Centered Funding Formula (a misnomer which really sticks in the craw in this context) certainly factors in here (i.e. the District would need several quarters of increased enrollment in order to raise our state apportionment from the 2017 level at which we're currently "held harmless"). Yet we certainly had *some* additional resources that could have been directed to areas where classes were filling early, and could certainly have been more lenient about class cancellations, as we were in the Spring. Which students are particularly hurt by not being able to get the classes they need to complete their degrees or training and enter the workforce? Generally speaking, it's the at-risk populations: students of color, first generation students, lower income students, working students and various combinations thereof. Another way of framing this might be, which students are *helped* by not being able to get the classes they need, in the middle of a pandemic, when many are struggling to earn a living for themselves and their families?

And what about the instructors who could have taught those classes? Our support of the District's championing of racial and ethnic equity (e.g. in our Opening Day activities) should not lead us to overlook underlying fiduciary inequities. On the surface, the 2020-21 Budget approved by the Board of Trustees indicates a stronger financial situation for us this year than had been previously projected. Apportionment is flat, non-resident revenue is assumed a 20% (rather than 30%) reduction, property tax revenue is up 3%, and the District has explicitly moved away from the idea that we should plan on Basic Aid funding. Yet across the District, assignments are much leaner for many adjunct instructors. District-wide the FTEF (which aggregates full and part-time faculty) is down 3.3%, or -24.3 Full-time Equivalent Faculty from a year ago (the lion's share of this reduction being part-time assignments). Yet the "2020-21 Adopted Budget" presentation at the recent Board meeting trumpeted a $0.5 million *increase* in the part-time faculty budget. A closer inspection reveals that this is an increase over what June's Tentative Budget, based on the May Revise, would have had in store for part-time instructors. In fact, funding for part-time salary has still been reduced $3.5 million from what is was funded in 2019-20 ("Facts at a Glance" 90). Much of this is accounted for by a correlative increase (all but $161,630) in funding for full-time salaries. Yet this doesn't jibe with the only 24 new full-time faculty starting this year, which, with benefits, would be roughly equivalent to $2.4 million. Also considering the fact that upwards of 40% of these new FT faculty were originally PT, we have well over $1 million unaccounted for. And it seems almost too much of a coincidence that the number of new faculty roughly corresponds to the 24.3 reduced FTEF in class offerings. Where'd the savings go? I am still waiting for a District response at the time of writing.

In the meantime, I've been hearing from faculty, particularly at Foothill, where almost all of this decline resides, that Winter is shaping up to be even leaner, as even some who've been on the reemployment preference list in their divisions for years have gotten little to nothing in the way of assignments. And this will hit adjuncts of color particularly hard, as they constitute a significantly higher percentage of newer, at risk, District faculty without reemployment preference. In the last 2 years, the percentage of African-American adjuncts has more than doubled, from 7% to 13%, the number of Latinx adjuncts increased to more than a quarter of the adjunct workforce, from 11.8% to 26.7%, and the number of Filipinx adjuncts more than quadrupled, from 1.4% to 6.7%. Rather than jeopardizing our institutional diversity by shrinking assignments for these faculty, we need to honor their hiring by trying, by any means necessary, to keep them in assignments until they're able to earn reemployment preference, and some measure of job protection.

Meanwhile, the $9 million dollar proposed budget reduction remains. In Chancellor Miner's Sept. 2nd email to all District employees alerting us to the reduction of the reduction (i.e. from the original $11.5 million) she noted that "<u>AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO FILLED POSITIONS, YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO IDENTIFY ONE-TIME FUNDS TO REACH YOUR TARGET</u>." Foothill has already planned how to meet their $3.15 million "target"--without any reductions to either full-time faculty or the 1320 fund out of which adjunct faculty salaries are paid (It's been hit hard enough as it is, you might say). De Anza, however, is just getting started with its $4.5 million share. Administration has put forward a potential plan which includes a $440,568 reduction to the 1320, which, while it may only be 2% of the total 1320 budget, amounts to an almost 10% proportion of the total reduction amount. And it is the only personnel related reduction planned for other than a $100,000 reduction to Release/Reassigned time, which I was assured in no uncertain terms would include a correlative reduction in duties. At the joint planning and budget meeting at which this plan was unfurled, faculty and staff were reassured that this is by no means necessarily "the" plan, and that input will be sought from constituents. Somehow this is all going to take place before the previously established Nov. 1st deadline, less than 3 weeks away. But apropos of what? Given how the District budget for this year has turned around from the doom-and-gloom-driven "Tentative" version based on the May Revise to the more realistic and evidentiary "Approved" budget, we now have less justification for a budget reduction than ever, certainly one of such fatuous (based on the District's own budget data) proportions. We have a more or less balanced District budget, the state legislature has extended hold harmless through 2024, we will (hopefully) have demand for classes again in Winter, and we have an experienced and able workforce. Why the cuts?

And regardless of the merits of the reduction itself, what's the big rush?

Since there would not be any elimination of FT positions entailed at either college, the District won't need to prepare in advance for March 15th "Reduction in Force" notices (unless, of course, they've already been planned for). What sense does it make to hurriedly cut $9 million only to potentially either have to do more cuts or find that we cut too deeply? Why not simply wait until January, when we will get an actual proposed 2021-22 budget from the governor, learn about property tax rolls, Winter enrollment, and potential federal aid, and can plan an evidence based and carefully orchestrated reduction--*if* need be? The rather circular answer I keep getting is that we need time to plan for any eventual reduction, despite the fact that we would have January-June to do exactly that. Show us the numbers, I say, that justify the need for this amount of a reduction at this time. It's high time we had some straight talk about the doom and gloom before it all evaporates and we are left holding the empty bag. As Kunzru says of equity invoked in such essentially corporate contexts, “raising or changing consciousness is conceived of as a prelude to possible future collective action. Perhaps if enough minds are changed, then social or political progress will be a natural (and preferably nonviolent) consequence. The difficult questions—of collective organization, of how the individual gets subsumed into a collective project, and of course the exercise of power—all fade tastefully into the background. The time is always soon, but never now.”

This is the first of a series of articles outlining the day to day work of FA. Today, we are featuring the accomplishments of the Negotiations team.

Let's Talk About Negotiations

by [Amy Edwards]
Interim Chief Negotiator

As Chief Negotiator this fall, I have been reflecting on the variety of issues addressed in negotiations. Faculty might assume the primary focus of FA is to negotiate salary increases. While a vital function, and one FA has been quite successful at over the years, many other matters that directly benefit faculty require negotiations with the District. Here is a partial list of what FA has accomplished lately:

Emergency situations: Since the start of the pandemic, FA has negotiated several COVID-19 related exceptions and adjustments to support faculty during these difficult times. For example, FA worked with the District to defer evaluations that would have otherwise been scheduled during spring quarter so that faculty, both full- and part-time, would not be evaluated while transitioning courses into an online format or while teaching online for the first time. The negotiating team also secured payment for part-time faculty professional development during the pandemic by negotiating the reallocation of remaining professional conference funds for this purpose.

Budget Reductions: FA has often advocated for the use of one-time money, most recently to offset the uncertain budget cuts we are currently facing, and finally the District has agreed. In a recent email Chancellor Miner encouraged constituencies to use one-time funds to cover the proposed $9 million budget reduction. Though pleased with this decision, FA proposes the District reconsider the amount and targets of the reduction in light of the most recent budgetary information and postpone any reduction until we have solid new budget information from the state (see "Budgetequity" in this issue).

Benefit Costs: FA is a strong leader on the Joint Labor Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC), where health benefits are negotiated among the different unions and the District. Over the last few years, we have been successful in keeping employee contributions to health benefits steady despite rising healthcare costs. For part-time faculty, FA worked with the district to base the district-paid portion of part-time health benefit contributions on the Kaiser plan(one of the more expensive plans) so that other plans, e.g., PERS Select, are even more affordable.

Along with these major accomplishments, FA has negotiated improvements for faculty as issues arise:

- Summer pay for faculty who worked on specific governance committees related to budget, return-to-campus discussions, and equity;
- PGA credit for the October 2 professional development day;
- Increases to both Training/Re-training and professional conference funds;
- Re-employment preference (REP) is now used for scheduling part-time faculty assignments during summer;
- An additional step (Step 8) was added to the part-time salary schedule in the 2019-2022 *Agreement;*
- Enhanced non-credit courses equivalent in load and pay-rate to credit courses; previously, faculty teaching these non-credit courses had lower

load and pay than faculty teaching credit courses for the same number of hours in the classroom.

- A Supplemental Retirement Plan (SRP), which in 2018-19 resulted in district-wide salary savings and fewer positions eliminated.

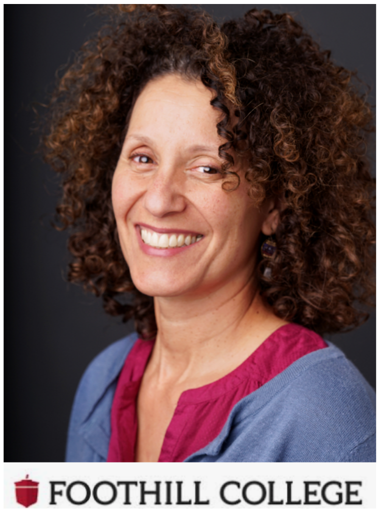
For the 2020-21 academic year, the negotiations team will continue to support faculty in all of these areas. Faculty who have questions regarding negotiations, please contact the FA office.

Spotlight: *FA Conciliation*

A conciliator for each campus is selected by the FA Executive Council for a three-year term. FA conciliators work to reconcile disagreements between faculty and Administration about misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation of the contract. The conciliators are the point-people for faculty of each campus to first contact FA with questions or concerns on contractual or other matters, and they work closely with FA's Grievance Officer, particularly when it appears that filing a grievance might become necessary. Among the conciliators' other duties, they advise the Chief Negotiator of any problems arising out of the current Agreement and suggest changes to alleviate those problems. Our conciliators bring to this position diplomacy, solid communication skills, a willingness to work with others, and an eagerness to help faculty whenever possible. Feel free to contact either Natalia Menendez from Foothill or Brandon Gainor from De Anza if you want to ask questions or discuss concerns.

Meet Your Conciliators:

Natalia Menendez**,** who became Foothill Conciliator in Fall of 2019, has been a full-time member of the Foothill College English Department since 1991. She helped found and develop the Pass the Torch Program, and was a founding member of the Mfumo Learning Community. She still
loves teaching most of all, from reading and writing skills, to critical texts and Literature that help students deconstruct racism and envision new ways of



being connected to their fellow humans in our pluralistic Democracy.

Brandon Gainer is a recent addition to the FA Team, having started the conciliator position as of Fall 2020. He is a full-time faculty member in Communication Studies, and serves as the department's co-chair and scheduler. In addition, he is the Faculty Coordinator for the Online Education Center at De Anza, working alongside the instructional designers to provide assistance at open labs, develop trainings, and assist faculty with improving their online instruction.

We are lucky to have Natalia and Brandon as the FA Conciliators!

Benefits Reminder-- **MANDATORY Online Enrollment**

Don't forget to complete your benefits selections before **5pm, October 16, 2020**

For Plan Year 2021, FHDA discontinued our contract with SECOVA, and partnered with Benefitfocus for online benefits enrollment. For this reason, ALL FT/Reduced Contract Employees are required to enroll online with **Benefitfocus** via Single Sign-on via **MyPortal.fhda.edu**. Due to legal compliance, employees are required to read, elect benefits, affirm attestation, and authorize payroll deduction.

Retirees and Part-time active employees with pre-existing coverage need do nothing unless they wish to make changes to their plan.

Recommendation: Faculty and staff should be sure to confirm

their Open Enrollment choices. Also, faculty and staff are encouraged to check their January 31, 2021 pay statements to be sure that all benefits changes have been accurately recorded. Report any problems promptly to the Benefits Unit at MyBenefits@fhda.edu.

Get Connected:
Join the Faculty Association Facebook page today!

Particularly for Part-timers

by Raymond Brennan
Part-Time Associate Secretary

When adjunct instructors are hired by the FHDA District, they are asked to select a retirement option. Given the blizzard of employment paperwork, new hires sometimes overlook or misunderstand the nuances involved in selecting a retirement option. This page is intended to clarify those options.

Option One: Social Security. An employee who has been paying into Social Security for many years may wish to continue to do so. Since it takes five years to "vest" in the CalSTRS Defined Benefit option, this choice may also be an appropriate for faculty members who do not plan to teach long-term.

Option Two: CalSTRS' "Cash Balance" option. The Cash Balance option works very much like a 401k or other defined benefit plan. It has no vesting requirement. Choosing Cash Balance means that employees will pay less into their retirement plan (currently 4%) than they would have had they chosen CalSTRS' "Defined Benefit" option—see below. Though there will be more in each monthly paycheck, there is a significant drawback to this option. A Cash Balance retirement plan means that the money an employee puts into the plan —which is matched by the District—will be invested by CalSTRS, and the total of that investment is paid out in a lump sum upon separation or retirement. However, as CalSTRS points out in its informational handout, "in a defined contribution plan, the amount of money paid at the time of retirement could be less than the amount contributed if investment returns were negative. In addition, the individual employee is responsible for selecting how his or her account balance is invested."

Option Three: CalSTRS' "Defined Benefit" option. The Defined Benefit option requires a larger percentage of monthly wages be invested into this retirement plan—an amount matched by the District—which is also invested by CalSTRS. The Defined Benefit option requires the equivalent of five-years Full-time service. As explained in FA's informational page, the "Defined Benefit" provides retirement, survivor and disability benefits, and COLA. The Defined Benefit retirement benefit is based on a formula set by law using the retiree's age, service credit, and final earnable compensation. The employee contributes 8% of total monthly pre-taxed earnings and the District contributes 8.25%."

Simply put, the Cash Balance option requires less money out-of-pocket each pay period and provides a one-time cash payout upon retirement, whereas the Defined Benefit option, though requiring a greater monthly contribution, provides a lifetime benefit.

All employees should log on to https://my.calstrs.com/ to create an account. From this account, employees will be able to both track their retirement investments and find information crucial to making informed retirement decisions.

Finally, many Part-time faculty may have been defaulted into or chosen the Cash Balance option without fully understanding the implications of doing so. Unfortunately, switching to the Defined Benefit plan could be costly. To maintain service credit earned, the difference between the Cash Balance investment (4% monthly) and the Defined Benefit plan investment requirement (8% monthly) needs to be addressed. The longer an employee has been in Cash Balance, the more costly such a change.

FAFHDA Thanks and Welcomes Our New Members!

Hilary Bacon	Julie Jenkins
Claudia Barbosa-Egbuonye	John Jimenez
Cynthia Brannval	Stephanie King
Maurice Canyon	Odiri Maku
Steven Clemmons	Ana Maravilla
Shannon Gifford	Mayra Palmerin Aguilera
Jennifer Gutierrez	James Tallent
Patricia Hassel	Janice Valadez

Executive Council Meeting Summary

October 7

- Foothill Graphic & Interactive Design instructor Carolyn Brown and Political Science instructor Kerri Ryer were appointed to the Executive Council for Fall quarter, replacing Karen Erickson and Kathy Perino, who are both on Professional Development Leave.

- The Council reviewed its finances and tax return prepared by Morton & Associates and were pleased to see some budget savings—the one bright spot from the campus shutdowns.

- The Executive Council reviewed FA's Campaigning Policy and discussed language additions to address the use of electronic voting. Revisions will be brought to the next meeting for action.

- Following a lot of confusion around implementation of a new process for health benefits open enrollment, it has been confirmed that active employees must enroll online for Plan Year 2021 using the BenefitFocus app on MyPortal. Retirees who do not wish to make benefit changes do not have to do anything. There is still conflicting information for part-time faculty who have district benefits, so their questions should be directed to the Benefits office.

NEWS
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FA News is normally published nine times during the academic year by the Foothill-De Anza Faculty Association, an independent California corporation certified by the California Public Employment Relations Board as the exclusive employee representative for the faculty of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. Letters and articles from

District faculty are invited. FA, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022. Ph: 650.949.7544 Email: ElwellSusanne@fhda.edu Website: http:fafhda.org

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