

union action

VOICE OF AFT 2121



A bittersweet victory

District discounts Prop A victory to push cuts

4-5



San Francisco
Community College
Federation of Teachers

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Voters have spoken. Will the District listen?

By Alisa Messer

Thanks to the dedication and perseverance of AFT 2121 members and allies, we did amazing work this election season, impacting not just City College's future but all of California. Under the guidance of our member-organizers Kathe Burick and Galina Gerasimova, our members logged more than 400 campaign shifts phonebanking, precinct-walking, doing outreach. This is an extraordinary number for a local of our size, and your hard work made Prop. A in particular a success.

The election results were fairly stunning, not just in San Francisco, but throughout California and beyond. We passed Proposition 30—a measure that literally begins to turn the taxation tides for the first time since Proposition 13 by substantially shifting taxes onto the wealthy and beginning to refund public education—with an eight-point margin. We beat back the attempt to dismantle California labor, defeating Proposition 32 by a twelve-point margin. And Democrats gained two-thirds supermajorities in the State Senate and Assembly, which means that raising revenues and veto-proofing legislation are, at least theoretically, new tools in Sacramento lawmakers' toolboxes. Nationwide, we saw more good news, from presidential results to more women elected to propositions supporting marriage equality.

An organized labor-community alliance accomplished record fieldwork on Propositions 30 and 32 and helped push these victories in California. Our statewide affiliate, the California Federation of Teachers, played a key role—including our early work in creating the Millionaires Tax, which shifted the governor's doomed, more regressive measure to a passable Prop. 30 that generates \$13 billion more than his original, taxes the wealthy an additional \$18 billion, and saves working families at least \$4.5 billion. In San Francisco, we engaged some of these same coalitions for Prop. A, most notably with community organizations such as the Chinese Progressive Association and Chinese for Affirmative Action, who worked with Chinatown faculty and students, engaged their memberships, educated voters, and ran a precedent-setting Chinese-language phone bank that reached 9,000 San Francisco voters.

These coalitions are groundbreaking and necessary, as the chang-

ing California electorate looks more like student demographics at City College. California voters are younger (7% more 18-29 year olds), poorer (12% more voters are making less than \$50,000 a year), and less white (7% more are people of color). I am struck by comparing the national conversation after President Obama's first victory, which was full of insipid claims about a "post-racial" nation (those claims finally withered under the in-your-faceness of the Tea Party and the Birthers), with the conversation in 2012. In this campaign, the pundits sound a more accurate note about paying attention to the whole of the electorate and all of the nation, including the 99%, the 47%, communities of color, and immigrants. It's a good moment to reflect on the civic work that we do; when we value and foster critical thinking skills in our students, we value future voters, future leaders, our collective futures.

By 72.9%, San Francisco voters gave City College an overwhelming message: they care about and are committed to our future (as we care about theirs) and they proclaim that we are worth the investment. They will be watching to ensure that City College meets its commitments to students and the workforce that serves them. They want to hear that the College is more effectively planning and running this complex institution—and that it will retain its accreditation, of course.

But voters have by no means demanded a college that shifts its priorities and resources to high-paid employees while downsizing, demoralizing, or denying access to those most vulnerable to the cuts—be they workers or students. Nor did they vote for a College that ignores the voices, commitment, and abilities of those within who offer critical perspectives and ideas for change. Even the FCMAT and ACCJC reports do not necessitate such moves to secure financial stability or CCSF's future.

Shoring up dwindling revenues for the College and the state's public education system has been a matter of principle for AFT 2121, and a matter too of protecting members and students and other workers. But while many now recognize that education funding is on its way up from the bottom, here at CCSF the race to downsize and undercut employees continues—the drumbeat marches on at the bargaining table. The District has created a new, artificial deficit in the 2013-14 budget by pulling the

\$16 million from Prop. A out of the budget.

CCSF faculty have taken huge hits over the last years—well over \$14 million since 2010-11. All employees have. Post-elections, we had hoped to move back on track towards a post-cuts world. The District clearly has other ideas: it is now seeking both short-term cuts to address the possible enrollment shortfall and long-term take-backs that will damage workers for years to come and undermine principles the College has long prioritized.

Our contract has faced increasing scrutiny, but the principles it embodies are clear and can withstand such scrutiny, even in the face of FCMAT and the ACCJC. Incoming revenues from Prop. A and Prop. 30 should provide the breathing room to implement smart and measured cost-effective changes. The new revenues are not a cure-all for City College, but they provide the means to a different and better path through the next several years.

We will not apologize for resisting the downsizing of our students' educations, for saving jobs, for trying to ensure that programs that are of profound benefit to students—particularly our most vulnerable students—continue, even in the face of relentless state cuts. We will not apologize for attempting to sustain employees' health and well-being at a time when the public sector and public education are under attack.

Yes, City College has the challenge of only months to meet the ACCJC's recommendations for its "Show Cause" report. AFT 2121 has been and will continue to be fully engaged in this effort to the extent that there is a joint effort to engage in. The College could be using this time to pull together in more positive directions, building transparent processes, engaging in substantive dialogue, and building on this City's commitment to a City College that will continue to serve San Franciscans for another 75 years.

We keep hearing that City College "misspent" or "mismanaged" by holding on, making too few cuts, serving students in the face of severe budget cuts. But the real travesty would be to have the public step up and say "City College, we support you" by passing Proposition A—and then losing San Francisco's trust and commitment by misspending the new funds in areas so far away from students and the classroom that voters wonder why they ever believed in us in the first place. (amesser@aft2121.org)

On the cover:

Students and faculty at Chinatown and Downtown campuses rally for revenue-raising propositions before November 6th.

Photos: Left courtesy of Chinatown coalition to support Prop A, Right Rudy Padilla

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AFT at loggerheads with District as contract deadlines approach

By Chris Hanzo

The goal of accreditation, according to the United States Department of Education, “is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.” Yet within a few short months, the threat of dis-accreditation by AACJC threatens to transform collective bargaining at City College of San Francisco (CCSF). Instead of the process envisioned under California’s Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA), what we’ve come to recognize as the give-and-take negotiations over the years at CCSF, the new administrative czars at CCSF are staking out a different bargaining turf, one that seeks to impose its demands. And, for the first time in decades, unionists at CCSF are talking about labor’s ultimate recourse under such conditions—the strike.

The latest confirmation of this shift by the District came after the November 6 election. Despite the passage of Propositions 30 and A that increased CCSF’s revenue bar by \$25 million, the District’s draconian list of “worst case” concessions, including massive unilateral wage cuts, remains on the negotiations table. Never mind the unprecedented efforts of faculty and classified employees who, in concert with labor and community supporters, reached out to those who care about our College. CCSF officialdom continues to project a negative message to the public about impending fiscal disaster and possible loss of accreditation. No wonder enrollment figures are

dropping; prospective CCSF students get this “message.”

The current administrative regime seeks to rollback decades of negotiated wages and working conditions of the 1600 faculty at CCSF. Their proposals read like a laundry list of employee takeaways: 10% plus wage reductions, withdrawal of health and dental benefits to hundreds of employees, cuts in sabbatical leave, elimination of tenure review pay, increases in faculty workload by 10%—the list goes on. To date, there has been no real engagement over the fiscal impacts of these proposals on education and educators—the critical issues that heretofore have informed the AFT/District collective bargaining process at CCSF.

Our contract expires on December 31, 2012. As we’ve reported in our weekly updates, the issues under negotiation include (1) transition from bi-weekly to monthly pay; (2) flex day obligations; (3) discussion over meeting FTES targets and impact on instructional schedule for Spring semester; (4) pay-by-load system; (5) assessing increased health care costs and impact on faculty premiums and District budget effective January 1, 2013; (6) surveys of statewide standards in community colleges regarding faculty compensation, workload, and other working conditions.

AFT is mindful of the debilitating impact of relentless cuts in State funding on CCSF. That explains why we have fought so hard for tax reform in California beginning with the Millionaire’s Tax and culminating in the passage of Proposition 30.

That is why we took the initiative to insure that San Francisco’s voters could vote to backfill losses to the College with the CCSF parcel tax.

Improvements to faculty conditions of work and compensation through negotiations with the District came when we were able to identify funding, which meant moderating our demands and reaching mutual agreement. With the precipitous cuts in State funding in recent years, however, we were forced to examine the impact on the District’s bottom line. We carefully identified savings from cuts in faculty assignments and attrition and agreed to salary givebacks in each of the last three fiscal years, all approved in faculty ratification votes. In the current year, these cuts and givebacks are saving the College \$8.4 million dollars of the District’s Unrestricted Budget. These are sacrifices largely unnoticed and unacknowledged by CCSF’s new high-paid interim administrators and consultants.

We stand in opposition to the proposed downgrading of compensation and working conditions of the faculty at CCSF. District proposals to cut salaries would drive faculty pay and benefits well below the average of those in other districts across the State. We call on faculty to resist these unwarranted and unfair takeaways. Join us as we mobilize to fight back. On December 13, we will rally at 33 Gough before the Board of Trustees meeting to make our voices heard. No to unilateral wage cuts! Stop the takebacks! Negotiate, not dictate! We want a fair contract! (chanzo@aft2121.org)

Did you know?

Part-timer reemployment and recall rights

- If you lost part of your “modal” or average load next semester, you should make sure your chair is making assignments to modal load in order of seniority and not “sharing the pain” by partially cutting each part-timer.
- If you have lost all of your classes for next semester, you probably have recall rights (Article 13-1.I): To invoke this right you must notify your chair in writing as soon as possible and no later than the first week of the upcoming semester indicating your interest in being recalled. You must

also file a preference form at the same time as everyone else for the fall semester. As in any semester, assignments will be by seniority, which you retain under this provision.

- If you have lost your medical benefits, know that they should extend until the end of January, as long as the District has taken from your December paycheck the “double deduction” necessary to keep you covered through the “break.” At that point, you may want to use COBRA coverage; however, it is expensive: employee-only Kaiser, \$548; Blue Shield, \$660. If you decide that at this point in your career you can afford to officially retire, you will have another option, still in the works: Retiring part-timers are allowed to purchase coverage through HSS as retirees. This means you will pay the total cost of your health plan, both the “employer pays” and the “employee pays” parts (See the HSS website). If you are eligible for Medicare Parts A and B, you will find that the total coverage for an employee-only retiree is between \$300 and \$400. If you are not eligible for Medicare A and B, the cost makes COBRA look good.



Unreasonable demands AFT opposes District's threat of unilateral action

By Chris Hanzo

The District is threatening a unilateral wage reduction based on the potential for a loss of State FTES funding for this year if enrollment goals are not met. With the AFT/District contract due to expire December 31, 2012, the District has set an extra-contractual December 19 deadline by which time it will unilaterally reduce faculty pay by up to 8% effective January, 2013 if the Union does not accede to major concessions. The District claims it must take this immediate action even though CCSF has a balanced budget this year, 2012/13, thanks to concessions and sacrifices made by all employee groups last June.

In asserting its rights to reduce wages without AFT's agreement, the District is invoking the "trombone" clause in our salary formula: when revenues increase, compensation increases; when revenues decline, so does compensation. This is exactly what has happened since revenues declined starting in 2009/10. But instead of unilaterally imposing a wage cut, as called for in the trombone clause, the parties negotiated a combination of givebacks and savings from cuts in assignment that helped the District achieve a balanced budget each year. [See table.]

For the current year, 2012/13, concessions and savings from program cuts are projected to save in excess of the \$8.4 million agreed upon in June, ratified by the faculty in September. AFT is arguing that the District cannot now go back on that agreement and demand more, particularly when there has been no further reduction in State spending.

AACJC threat looms large in negotiations

Without doubt, the AACJC threat to withdraw CCSF's accreditation is impinging on the collective bargaining process. In addition to

the immediate threat of a unilateral wage reduction, the District has also changed its bargaining position regarding the millions of dollars in new revenues for 2013/14 from the Prop A Parcel Tax. Citing "accreditation requirements," the District has literally altered the revenues in the 2013/14 Budget Scenario, a widely-distributed budget planning document. In doing so, the District has created an artificial \$9.8 million deficit in 2013/14, and demands an ongoing 5% decrease in wages to pay for it!

AFT hits back at District

Under the threat of disaccreditation by AACJC and fiscal control by the State-appointed trustee, the District is failing to engage negotiations over the possible loss of FTES funding from declining enrollment and over new revenues next year from Prop. A. The Union will seek redress if the District makes good on its threat to preemptively cut faculty wages this December by filing a contract compliance grievance over their failure to abide by negotiated agreements, which would go to arbitration. Unfair labor practice charges could also follow if the District's bad behavior at the table rises to bad faith bargaining.

AFT demands that the District immediately (1) withdraw its threat of unilateral wage reductions; (2) restore \$16 million in new revenues to the projected 2013/14 CCSF budget; (3) engage with and provide the Union information necessary to enable good faith bargaining over a successor agreement to our current contract.

AFT is taking necessary action to stop the District from exceeding its authority, in particular, District attempts to dictate working conditions at CCSF and downgrade our contract. We call on all faculty to unite against these attacks and act in concert to defend our rights. (chanzo@aft2121.org)

District revenues rebounding:

2008/09

2009/10

\$201.3m

\$205.3m

Total District
Unrestricted
General Fund
Revenue

State Funded FTES: 34,741
Faculty sacrifices savings to District: \$1.4m
Freeze salary step advancement

\$92.2m

\$88.9m

Total CCSF
faculty salaries
Unrestricted
Budget

Total number of faculty: 1,814
Full-time faculty: 813
Part-time faculty: 1,001





What about worker livelihoods and student access?

2010/11

2011/12

2012/13

2013/14

\$200.8m

State Funded FTES: 37,391
 1% temporary faculty wage reduction = savings of \$1.2m to District
 Other cuts in faculty savings bring total savings to District to \$1.57m
 District agrees to offset for large increase in medical premiums
 Part-timers who lose assignments due to budget crisis remain eligible for benefits
 Salary step advancements resume
 Retiring faculty made whole from 0.45% giveback

\$191.6m

State Funded FTES: 32,395
 Faculty sacrifices to fill gap of unanticipated State funding cut of \$2.88 million.
 Faculty share of \$2.88m = \$1.7m
 Faculty giveback: 0.45% temporary wage reduction = \$500K savings to District
 Other savings realized from cuts in faculty assignments, suspension of tenure work and pay, and reductions in day-to-day subbing
 Retiring faculty made whole from 0.45% giveback

\$186.6m

State Funded FTES goal: 32,632
 Faculty sacrifices to help close projected \$14m budget deficit
 Temporary faculty wage reduction: 2.85%
 Total savings from faculty wage giveback and other faculty cuts: \$8.4m
 Rollback of increases in faculty medical premiums
 Retiring faculty made whole from 2.85% giveback

\$201.3m

(with projected \$16m from CCSF Parcel Tax)

- Prop A proceeds were designed to achieve the following:
- To provide City College of San Francisco with funds the State cannot take away;
 - To offset State budget cuts;
 - To prevent layoffs;
 - To provide an affordable, quality education for students;
 - To maintain essential courses including, but not limited to writing, math, science, and other general education;
 - To prepare students for four-year universities;
 - To provide workforce training including, but not limited to, nursing, engineering, business, and technology;
 - To keep college libraries and student support services open; and
 - To keep technology and instructional support up to date.

\$88.3m

Total number of faculty: 1,751
 Full-time faculty: 812
 Part-time faculty: 939

\$86.7m

Moratorium on further class cuts and part-time counseling cuts in Spring 2012
 Total number of faculty: 1,740
 Full-time faculty: 823
 Part-time faculty: 917

\$83.1m

Total number of faculty: 1,579
 Full-time faculty: 780
 Part-time faculty: 799

?????

Will workers and students see any benefit from rebounding revenue?



District seeks to reduce health benefits

Healthcare access neither “privilege” nor “perk”

By Chris Hanzo

The SFCCD, fueled by both the AACJC accreditation report and the State fiscal monitoring team’s (FCMAT) recommendations, is taking aim at employee health coverage, seeking to shed itself of the rising costs of providing coverage and eliminate as many employees from coverage as it can. The District hopes to do this in several ways: (1) reduce the number of full-time faculty at City College through attrition; (2) eliminate or reduce health coverage of part-time faculty; (3) shift the cost of health coverage from the employer to employees.

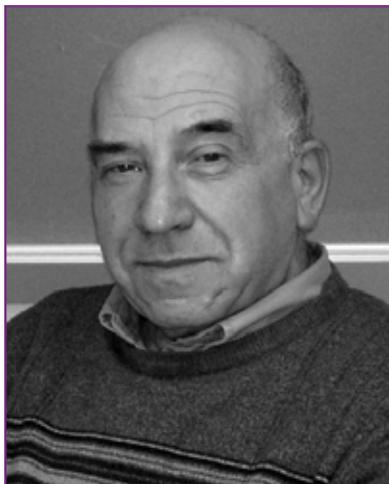
This flies in the face of decades of public policy in California, which encouraged public funding of private health insurance companies to provide health coverage to expanding numbers of public employees, their dependents, and retirees, rather than the establishment of State-sponsored universal health care.

The growth and concentration of market-share and wealth in the hands of a few insurance company giants driven by profit, however, has led to ever-increasing health care costs for both employers and employees and an increasing scarcity of health coverage provided to the

populace—millions of Americans are denied this basic need.

We oppose policies at City College and throughout our society that would deny employees access to health care. Currently, 1,100 faculty at CCSF are covered under the City’s Health Service System (HSS), 385 of whom are part-time employees. AFT first negotiated the extension of HSS coverage to part-time faculty working at least 50% FTE in 1983. These employees, the vast majority of whom are career teachers, counselors and librarians who have worked at CCSF for 10 to 30 years, depend on this coverage every bit as much as their full-time faculty colleagues, administrators, and other staff.

Depriving faculty of health care and burdening employees with ever increasing health care premiums is not the answer. Public employers like City College and the City and County of San Francisco should instead join labor and community efforts to support health care reform and fight for real solutions to the health care crisis. With the positive momentum from the November 6 elections and the new supermajority in the State legislature, the health care reform agenda can now move to the front burner. (chanzo@aft2121.org)



**Roman Urman,
Mathematics Instructor**

As a CCSF instructor of eleven years and freeway flyer for decades, Urman says that City College is the only community college that has provided him with health coverage. A May 2011 survey of health benefits at various California community colleges* showed that many of those providing benefits tend to prorate based on workload, and some, like College of San Mateo where Urman also works, provide no coverage at all for part-timers.

Q: What do part-time health benefits provide for you?

A: I’ve been covered by City College since 2005, when my wife retired [from a job which provided health benefits]. I have preexisting conditions: diabetes, hypertension, arthritis. For the medication I’m prescribed for arthritis, I only pay \$100 and the insurance pays \$300. Our premiums are increasing, but they’re still affordable. In a meeting with our department chair, the issue was brought up that part-timers may lose health benefits. I know that people are very concerned.

Q: Is there a safety net for part-timers without coverage?

A: I’m approaching Medicare age, but many others are not. I don’t know what I’d do if I lose insurance. Both my disabled son and my wife are on Medicare. The situation is getting worse; many important procedures are denied. Regarding Obamacare, I don’t know if things will change. I suspect that many employers will increase the [employee share of] premiums and force them to rely on government programs.



**Kathe Burick,
PE/Dance Instructor**

Burick has taught dance and PE classes at CCSF for the past 33 years. She started getting covered as a part-time instructor around twenty years ago. Recently she underwent surgery for cataracts and, due to complications, needs to wait on surgery for the second eye.

Q: Why is it important for part-timers to have health benefits?

A: Generally, our income is a little lower, so it’s harder to pay for health insurance. A lot of part-timers are young people with children. There are at least 3 young families in our department. For those part-timers to lose benefits, it would be drastic. It’ll push young, intelligent people out of teaching.

Q: What does it mean for you to have insurance?

A: It means I can afford to stay healthy enough to keep teaching my class every day. I would like to have the second cataract surgery done. The first eye progressed so rapidly that I lost my vision, which surgery restored. I’d prefer not to have that happen with the other eye. I paid \$50 out of pocket; the bill was \$11,000.

**Wendy Miller,
Program Coordinator, Economic & Workforce Development; Fashion Instructor**



Miller first received coverage when she reached the .5 FTE threshold after teaching fashion for three years. As a long-time business owner, she had been paying \$500/month for an individual plan with a huge deductible. Nearly two years after getting coverage through CCSF, Miller was diagnosed with breast cancer. Later that year she took on categorically-funded work on a temporary full-time basis.

Q: How did you manage work after your diagnosis?

In January 2009, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I had a lumpectomy and radiation therapy, and through it all I worked full-time [initially through ancillary hours], including summer because I was terrified of losing health insurance. Now I’m turning 59. I’m a breast cancer survivor. If I’m put in the position of finding my own health insurance at this point, there is no way I can afford it.

Q: What would you say to those making decisions about faculty benefits?

They’re forgetting what actually happens when people have life-threatening or major medical [issues]. There’s a whole cascade effect. If a class doesn’t meet three hours a week, you can’t get a substitute. What happens to that person, their students, their families?

If we’re not going to have single-payer health care, a recognition of the common good, why shouldn’t a progressive institution support its employees? Dollars and costs are not the same thing; you can’t measure all the costs. Cutting benefits is short-sighted. It’s penny wise and pound foolish.

STUDENTS SAVING CITY COLLEGE



WILLIAM WALKER,
Student Trustee, CCSF Board of Trustees

Mobilizing students at several campuses, Walker was outspoken at rallies, in classrooms, and out in the precincts in support of City College. "Our strength is in our students. There's a threat to close Ft. Mason campus, and students gave a big show of support [at the last board meeting]. They held 30 public speaking cards and filled most of the room."



CHRISTY XU,
Student, Chinatown North Beach campus

Working with community groups, students canvassed merchants in Chinatown on ballot measures, registered many new voters, and demystified the process for non-native speakers. Xu helped to coordinate student volunteers. "Before going into the streets, we discussed how to talk to citizens about the importance of City College. I felt that I had a responsibility to promote Proposition A."



BOUCHRA SIMMONS,
ASC President, Downtown campus

Since July, the Associated Student Council worked tirelessly in support of Prop 30 and A, giving testimonials at City Hall, registering voters, and organizing a Save City College march downtown with hundreds of students just before the election. "When you are visible it makes a huge difference. It was great to see people clapping as we came through. November 5th is the date to remember!"

New trustee says he'll focus on human needs

By Li Miao Lovett

With the support of San Francisco's progressive community, Rafael Mandelman sailed in to victory with a seat on the Board of Trustees as its only new member.

He's an attorney who has worked on affordable housing and redevelopment, taking on social issues that involve a "complicated coalition" of labor, environmental groups, and tenants. He hopes to translate that expertise in affordable housing to affordable public education. "I know a thousand times more about City College now than when I started running," says Mandelman, "and I recognize that I only know a tiny, tiny bit about what the dynamics are." He intends to approach the job with humility, and that's a breath of fresh air in these contentious times.

The accreditation crisis has exacerbated power struggles at the college, and just recently the Board unanimously voted for decimation of the role of department chairs. Faculty spoke passionately at the October meeting that lasted late into the night. While serving on the Board of Appeals, Mandelman dealt with people who were just as emotionally invested in their homes and neighborhoods. He recognizes the

"There may be more wisdom out in a department and in people actually doing the work—that recognition is important to preserve."

importance of listening, especially on issues that affect people's lives. He may decide to hold "office hours" or coffee chats as local officials have done, in order to hear out what City College constituents have to say.

They say it takes a village, and that describes Mandelman's childhood where he was raised by caring people who stepped in when his mother wasn't able to take care of him. "I ended up being a group project," he says, "I lived with my grandmother, families of different schools, an English teacher for three years in high school. I got a lot of help growing up." And from there, he went on to a "gold-plated education" through financial aid and a successful career in law.

Now Mandelman has a facility in bringing together disparate groups, and it probably comes from those early experiences. "I really do believe that you don't—that most

people don't—get through life without help from other people." City College received that help when 72% of San Francisco voters passed the Prop A city parcel tax, a measure that Mandelman supported throughout his campaign.

While this may not be the easiest time to assume the role of Trustee, Mandelman is willing to take on the challenge. "In terms of looking at cuts, no single person, not even the Board of Trustees, alone gets to decide. It's a collaborative process that requires a lot of input from students, that has to be negotiated with employee groups." He adds, "I'm looking forward to getting through the tough stuff at the start of my term and getting to more fun stuff later on."

Given pressures to downsize and reorganize across the board, City College's smaller programs like Women's studies and LGBT studies are especially at risk. Mandelman has been active in the LGBT Democratic



succession of budget cuts over the last several years. "The central brain needs to be stronger. There may be places where a broadly diffused, democratic process impedes administrative effectiveness."

One area where City College has received a lot of criticism is personnel costs. Mandelman is looking underneath the headlines at what's actually going on. "The FCMAT appeared to find fault with City College for its use of full-time as opposed to part-time faculty. The college does have more full-timers than part-timers as a proportion of the faculty," he says. "On the other hand, it's still below what higher-ed standards recommend."

And he can hear beyond the shrill media cries that 92% of the budget goes to employee salaries and benefits. "That 92% figure reflected the laudable effort by administrators to preserve as much programming that benefits students as they could." Mandelman continues, however, by noting that it's not a sustainable figure when considering the need for building up reserves, adequate administrative staff, and investment in technology. He also notes the significant challenges faced by City College down the line in providing health care for retirees.

Mandelman's election has been met with great hope in his ability to build consensus amidst divisive groups. He's ready to tackle complex problems and spreadsheets while focusing on human needs, especially for those whose survival might be staked on City College's. "I believe that the unions at the school, the workers, really care and want what's best for the school and students. There's an alignment of interests there. We're going to get through and the school's going to be stronger." (editor@aft2121.org)

California pension "reform": A statewide attack on employee rights

By Doug Orr

On September 12, 2012, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 340. While this bill is not nearly as bad as Brown's original proposal, it is still an attack on unions, collective bargaining rights and the standard of living of middle-class Californians.

Since the 1970s, businesses have used the creation of "two-tier" compensation systems to undermine and destroy private-sector unions. In times of crisis, management proposes draconian wages and benefits cuts, and then "compromises" by grandfathering current employees and only imposing the changes on new hires. As new workers are hired, they rightfully ask why they are paying the same union dues yet getting much less. Ultimately, this divide and conquer strategy undermines the solidarity necessary to maintain a viable union, and the firm pushes for union de-certification. Unionization rates for private-sector wage and salary workers have fallen from 23 percent to less than 7 percent, and wages and benefits have declined as well.

The attack has now shifted to public-sector employees and Governor Brown is playing this same game by creating provisions adversely affecting new CalSTRS-covered employees—the second tier.

AB 340 raises the normal retirement age from 60 to 62, rather than 67 as Brown proposed. For someone who started employment at age 30, this represents a 7 percent increase in the cost of their pension, which is significantly less than the 23 percent Brown proposed. The age required to reach the maximum pension benefit was raised from 63 to 65. In 2010-11, the average retirement age was 62, and only 20 percent of CalSTRS new retirees were 65 or older, so a lot fewer new-hires are likely to receive the maximum benefit.

Raising the retirement age also reduces the total pension benefit. If life expectancy is 80 years, AB 340 reduces total maximum pension benefits by 12 percent, which is less than the 35 percent reduction Brown proposed; however, paying 7 percent more for 12 percent less is a significant change.

The legislation requires that pension benefits now be calculated on the highest three consecutive years of compensation rather than just one. In times of furloughs and salary cuts, this can have significant impacts.

As bad as this is, ultimately the AFT, along with other unions and our allies in the legislature, were able to defeat the worst aspects of Brown's proposal, including his call to fully eliminate half of our defined benefit pension. Yet, the drum beat and propaganda of "pension crisis" is still strong, and these same changes could be extended to all current employees. The fight is far from over. (dorr@ccsf.edu)



If you have any **changes** in your **personal status (email, address, phone number)**, please get in touch with **Wendy Leung** at the union office by calling **415-585-2121** or emailing **wleung@aft2121.org**.

Pension reform FAQ

By Cliff Liehe

On January 1, 2013, the California Public Employees Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) and revisions to the California Education Code affecting the CalSTRS Defined Benefit (DB) retirement plan go into effect. After 12/31/12 new instructors will only be able to become members of a new, less beneficial DB plan. But how are current instructors affected by the changes to the DB plan?

Q: Can I still buy "air time" (nonqualified service credit) after 12/31/12? A: No. To buy air time, you must be vested (i.e., have five years service credit) and CalSTRS must receive and date stamp your request by 5:00 pm on 12/31/12.

Q: Can I still buy permissive service credit or redeposit previously withdrawn contributions after 12/31/12? A: Yes.

Q: What is the annual earnings limit for DB retirees? A: The 2012-13 earnings limit for K-14 public school employment is \$40,011. It will be adjusted each year beginning July 1 and applies to all DB retirees, both current and future.

Q: If I retire after 12/31/12, will the new (additional) \$0 earnings limit for the first 180 days after retirement apply to me? A: Yes. It will apply regardless of your age and unless very special conditions are met. For most DB members, this means that for every dollar earned teaching in K-14 public schools during the first 180 days after retirement, your DB retirement benefit will be reduced by the same amount. This limit applies to earnings from subbing also.

Q: If I retire before 2013, will the new \$0 earnings limit for the first 180 days after retirement apply to me? A: According to CalSTRS, only if you will be under age 60 at time of retirement (current law). If you will be age 60 or older at time of retirement, the new \$0 earnings limit will not apply to you.

Q: If I retire after 12/31/12, can my unused sick leave still be converted to service credit? A: Yes.

Q: If I was a part-timer in Social Security or the CalSTRS Cash Balance (CB) retirement plan before 2013 and join DB after 12/31/12, will I still be in the current DB plan? A: According to CalSTRS, you will be placed in the current DB plan (i.e., same as if you had joined DB prior to 2013).

Q: After 12/31/12 will there be any new restriction not existing now on my right to collect unemployment benefits if I teach part-time as a retiree? A: No.

Q: Where can I find out more information about the new pension reform laws? A: Go to www.calstrs.com. (cliehe@aft2121.org)

ALERT!

1. As AFT2121 has reported via email, the District is moving to unilaterally impose an enormous cut in faculty pay and a transition to monthly pay beginning January 2, 2013. AFT 2121 is filing legal challenges to these actions through our contractual grievance and arbitration procedure and with the Public Employment Relations Board.
2. Our contract expires on December 31, 2012. Negotiations over a successor agreement resume in January. During these negotiations, all provisions of the contract remain in force, including the grievance procedure.
3. We recognize that there are more questions than answers at this time, especially about what this cut will look like. We will continue to work to clarify and communicate with faculty. Reports and updates on these developments and our fightback are at aft2121.org and bit.ly/Dec19negotiations. Stay tuned in and be ready to join our actions in January.

ALERT!