



Faculty Association

Pasadena City College

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1570 E. Colorado Blvd., U-248 · Pasadena, CA 91106

**PCCFA Newsletter**

**September/October 2009**

**Activism Triumphant: YOU/WE turned the tide!** Were it not for hundreds of students and scores of staff and teachers who demonstrated throughout the summer, PCC's Board of Trustees would have slashed the Winter Session, Paulette Perfumo would have muddled on, and the entire campus would have staggered from one crisis to another. Without the heroic efforts of students, staff, and teachers who stood their ground, the stunning budget disparities would never have been brought to light. Congratulations to all of those who participated in a great democratic moment for our college! However, we can not rest.

**Congratulations to Interim President Lisa Sugimoto**

It should be obvious that the college desperately needs a professionally competent person of integrity and substance—someone who grasps that PCC is an educational institution with a mission that emphasizes human fulfillment. Dr. Lisa Sugimoto is by a huge campus consensus, an outstanding candidate for the presidency of the college. Certainly, she is the calm, stabilizing presence so desperately needed at this point. Why then did the Board of Trustees vote only 5 to 2 in favor of Dr. Sugimoto to be Interim President? Why did **Trustee Castro** and **Board President Mann** vote No? One administrator who wished to remain anonymous shook his/her head and asked of Castro and Mann, “What the hell were they thinking?” We can only surmise...However, we support President Sugimoto's efforts to bring reason and stability to our campus. But first, we need to review the Board's deliberations that led to the crisis that will take months, even years to overcome.

**Perfumo: The Symptom not the Problem!**

Paulette Perfumo is gone and in the words of one anonymous PCC staff member, “She was last seen cruising up the 5 Freeway in her new Cadillac with a satchel full of our money.” According to the District, Perfumo received \$215,000 to leave. Even her departure entailed an odd and less than transparent cover story. First, she was on special assignment, to continue as a Research Specialist in Northern California. **Trustee Geoff Baum** intoned, “We anticipate value for the assignment?” (*Courier* 9/10/09) Oh really? Fortunately, Board members came clean and conceded, Perfumo was ‘dismissed.’ However, with the Board's extension of her contract last winter, she is entrusted with our money—a whole lot of it.

**How did the Perfumo affair become such a debacle?**

**First, recall two years ago, that the Board selected Dr. Paulette Perfumo in a most unprofessional and puzzling manner.**

A distinguished fifteen-person Search Committee, made of eight PCC faculty and staff and seven members of the community hand picked by Board members themselves, conducted lengthy deliberations to establish a short list of qualified candidates. By all accounts, Perfumo was far from the top. However, the Board ignored the Search Committee's findings and chose Perfumo. Why? **Trustee Connie Castro** claimed “she interviewed so well.” Those of us who suffered Perfumo's painfully self-indulgent soliloquies find that hard to believe. Whenever substantive issues were to be addressed, she turned the meeting over to a delegated expert like Mark Zukovic or Kindred Murillo; both are now gone.

Some have speculated that certain Board members wanted a weak candidate they could control after enduring years of the autocratic Jim Kossler. Still another theory is that the Board shied away from anyone who had a whiff of being supportive of staff or faculty. We may never know, but we do know that this Board's judgment is suspect.

**Second, the Board's oversight of Perfumo's tenure was appallingly lax.**

While jaws dropped when Perfumo demanded and received a car—the college bought her a \$53,000 Cadillac (and then sold it to her for about half the original price) Perfumo's expert fund raising skills (more rumor than real) were to merge with her desire for a house that she urged the college purchase. For Perfumo, style always trumped substance, but the Board was deaf to the criticism and extended her contract with a hefty raise (approximately 12%) in early 2009. It coincided with the salary 'adjustments' for managers. Those of us in the staff and academic ranks blinked in amazement. The massive banking crisis was already four months along, the state budget was a war zone, and the Board was handing out raises to its top people while telling the rest of us that austerity ruled the day.

**Why would the Board extend Perfumo's contract with a healthy raise *before* it conducted formal evaluations?** Why did the evaluation take approximately six months? We now know that managers were incensed with Perfumo's lack of leadership; she had actually blocked an attempt to assess budget priorities back in fall, 2008. Perfumo's "people skills" were wearing thin. The Board, however, was not interested in any input.

**Only after this summer's budget revelations caused a college wide eruption did Board President Jeanette Mann ask to meet (August 4<sup>th</sup>) with PCCFA President Roger Marheine and Past President Suzanne Anderson.** In that historic meeting, President Mann staunchly denied knowing the budget had over \$18.3 million in reserve and actually \$2.5 million more than a year earlier! PCCFA leaders were incredulous. How could the President of the Board not know the college's finances? The budget facts were available in the Vice President of Fiscal Services Office and had been shared in formal Negotiations Sessions with the PCCFA. Thus **Trustee Geoff Baum's** motion to cut Winter Session (2010) at the July meeting despite a storm of protests proved not only to be callous and but strikingly uninformed. The motion was seconded by **President Mann**. Without regard for the real needs of students and without any genuine effort, imagination, or analysis, the Baum-Mann motion epitomized the Board's limitations.

**Third a responsible Board should have moved quickly to admit its mistakes and correct its errors.**

**Instead, at its August 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, it only reinstated 55% of the Winter Session. Why not the entire winter?** Note that Glendale CC, with a much smaller budget will hold 70% of its Winter Session. For an embarrassing fifteen minutes, **Trustee Baum** attempted to revise the previous meetings minutes in an Orwellian errand to fix the historical record and erase his motion to cut the Winter Session! One day later (August 6<sup>th</sup>), Perfumo was gone. In subsequent follow-up discussions with individual Trustees, PCCFA leaders asked how the Trustees were now analyzing the budget. In a candid moment, one Trustee admitted the Board had asked former President Jim Kossler to assist with budget because, the Trustee said, "**He was good at hiding money.**" Good grief! This is what a desperate and frankly unscrupulous board will resort to. Let's be honest; this board is not good at governing, not good at crisis management, and not good for our community. It is time for a change.

**Grievance Update: PCCFA's relationship with Division Deans:** A number of faculty have come to PCCFA leadership in recent months with grievances and complaints about their Division Deans. We get several calls per week. As the stress level intensifies, many deans have expressed their dismay over the state of the college. A number of deans are well-intentioned individuals who empathize with teachers. The deans however are put in the unenviable position in which they must administer the cuts, make the phone calls to the Part Timers who have lost their jobs, cancel sections, face irate students, cut back the tutoring labs, and make do with cuts in their own offices. And Deans have no job security.

However, Deans must make professional choices to be part of the effort to save relatively open access to college for all students regardless of financial status. We would hope that Deans for example would call on the District to institute paid conference hours for Part Time Faculty.

**The cuts mean that increasingly faculty are being asked to work for free.** Unfortunately some Deans have encouraged that faculty substitute for each other without compensation. PCCFA is absolutely opposed to any professional activity that is not compensated. Most recently, Deans are asking for more work often under the auspices of 'college governance'—working without compensation is a slippery slope that only tolerates increased exploitation. Expediency should never sacrifice sound educational practice or entail increased exploitation. Indeed, in the midst of the budget cuts, the college's revelations that it actually has \$2.45 million *more* in Reserves than last year should only strengthen our resolve not to work for free.

**Two Divisions (Engineering and Technology and Social Sciences) violated contract by holding division meetings before the semester began that obligated Full Time Faculty attendance.** Now some faculty have reported harassment from their dean for missing the meetings. This is unacceptable and should cease immediately.

Finally, PCCFA is pleased to note that grievances have been addressed professionally—with integrity and expertise-- by Human Resources personnel. PCCFA has raised a number of issues that have received the prompt attention they deserve; it is a refreshing change from the prior HR leadership.

### **Negotiations Update**

Frankly, with the Board mired in its messes, it has been impossible to negotiate meaningfully. Consider that PCCFA negotiators proposed a basic **Early Retirement Incentive** ("Golden Handshake") package last spring, but the Board has not taken the opportunity to address a proposal that it apparently wants passed! According to VP Van Pelt's budget proposal (September 16<sup>th</sup>), the District hopes to save \$1 million through the incentive. PCC CSEA leaders noted that a retirement plan in place before January 1<sup>st</sup> would have benefited many of their members, but the Board's failure to move has not only hindered CSEA members' plans, but has cost the college tens of thousands of dollars. In contrast, Glendale CC unveiled a plan in late spring, 2008, and 41 individuals (teachers, staff, and managers) retired by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Other issues, including maternity leave, work load contract language for librarians and counselors, and Part Timer issues can not be pursued until the Board's dysfunction is corrected.

### **In Solidarity with growing opposition against cuts at the CSUs and UCs:**

Teachers at the four-year universities are generally far less organized than community college or K-12 teachers. Professionalism too often undermines a tradition of solidarity. The CSU faculty state wide voted by a relatively close margin to accept furloughs and cuts equivalent to approximately 14%. Cal Poly Pomona slashed its summer program, and CSULA's refuses to accept students until fall 2010; both are precedent-setting and will obviously impact our students tremendously. The CSU administration admits it plans to reduce its overall student population by 40,000 (approx 10%) even as it has tripled its tuition in the past eight years (including a 30% increase for this fall!). At the UCs, despite massive reserves in the billions of dollars, cuts have also been made.

As classes began for the fall quarter, massive demonstrations were organized at the UCs and some Cal State campuses. Perhaps most impressive has been the UC Santa Cruz walkouts with UC Berkeley and Irvine also showing numbers. Locally, CSULA students and teachers spearheaded demonstrations and teach-ins that PCC students and teachers have supported. Given so many of our students transfer to CSULA, PCCFA has reached out to CSULA teachers to build alliances that will hopefully allow for joint strategies in the budget struggles ahead. Also, at our last general membership meeting (September 17<sup>th</sup>) it was proposed that we reach out to local K-12 teachers, students, and their families. These are essential alliances that will make us all stronger.

### **Mark Your Calendars:**

**October 15<sup>th</sup>--PCC Trustees Candidate Forum, 11:30-1:30 Campus Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.** (Sponsored by the Academic Senate, PCCFA and other campus groups).  
Board elections are November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **PCCFA Leadership Board endorsements**

**Steven Gibson** (Area One)

**Beth Wells-Miller** (Area Seven).

We did not take no position for Area Three for either the incumbent, Connie Castro or her opponent, Belinda Brown. Hilary Bradbury-Huang is running unopposed in Area Five.

### **PCCFA contact Information**

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### **PCCFA Leadership Board**

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