

Pasadena City College Faculty Association (PCCFA)

Newsletter March 2009

Economy

The Nation—The Great Unraveling. Bailout the rich, layoff workers, cut wages and benefits. AIG's net loss for the last quarter 2008 was \$61.7 billion—a record. AIG has now collected \$180 billion dollars of federal bailout money. Citigroup has received three different bailouts since October, and Bank of America swallowed investment bank Merrill Lynch only to collect bailout money for its excesses. Major pharmaceutical Merck is to purchase Swiss company Schering-Plough; the deal is funded by bailed out banks, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, and Bank of America. Expected job losses—35,000! Total US job losses now are averaging 650,000 per month. United Auto Workers at Ford negotiated a deal to give up benefits. One of five US homeowner mortgages is in negative equity; in California 30% of homeowners owe more than what their homes are worth.

And now the escalation of the war in Afghanistan...

State

After all the accounting deferrals, clumsy deal making, and posturing about taxes, the final Sacramento budget cuts for community colleges came in just under \$40 million statewide. Districts with huge surpluses like Pasadena can easily absorb their share of cuts. Others will face course reductions and layoffs, especially for Part Time faculty. Cuts for K-12 and other social welfare services were draconian. One advantage to the Sacramento budget delays is that we are already getting a picture of next year. The general consensus at the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (www.FACCC.org) is that it could have been much worse for CCs—that CCs are viewed as primary institutions vital to the state economy. Indeed, while COLA has been eliminated, the CC portion of the state budget provides for 3% growth for 2009/10. While much ado about taxes was made in this budget session, one billion dollars in corporate tax incentives (cuts) went into the state budget. *Los Angeles Times* writer, Steve Lopez notes that California is 17th in taxes compared to other states, and that from 2001-05, California's average net income increased 22.7% but net income for corporations increased 557%!!! And finally, our state pays approximately \$46,000 per year for every prison inmate, but only about \$11,000 for CSU and UC students. For our Community College students, about \$7000 per year is allocated. So much for having our priorities straight.

PCC Local--Victory for CEC Full Timers!

After three months of negotiations, PCCFA Grievance officers and attorneys were able to get the District to concede that its arbitrary withholding of Full Time Overload wages was a violation of contract. Thousands of dollars in back pay will be forthcoming to five CEC teachers who were incorrectly told they were to work a 28 hour teaching load instead of 25 hours which has been the past practice.

Part Time Faculty—Critical to Higher Education

In a Peter Schmidt's revealing article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Use of Part-Time Instructors Tied to Lower Student Success" (11/14/08), he notes disturbing four-year college statistics—today 46% of college faculty nationwide are part time compared to 22% in 1970. In community colleges, the exploitation is worse—today 67% of faculty are part time compared to 40% in 1970. PCC's numbers are similar with about 405 Full Time Faculty and over 800 Part Time Instructors. Approximately 38% of PCC's classes including critical basic skills courses are taught by Part Timers.

The article quotes Cary Nelson, president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), who concedes the gross negligence in the treatment of Part Time teachers: "We have had our heads in the sand about this problem for many years, and the problem is getting worse." An AAUP researcher, Ernst Benjamin, notes community college students "need help the most [but] are not getting it." PCC which has long denied Part Time teachers compensated office hours, health care, equitable pay, or seniority hire back rights has thus assured large turnover of teachers that undermine continuity in academic program. Nancy B. Shulock of the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy at CSU Sacramento states, "[T]here is no disputing that having students be able connect on a personal and sustained basis with faculty is important." Obviously PCC students who have Part Time Teachers suffer a particular form of educational discrimination with no way to consult with their instructors outside of class.

The *Chronicle* article identifies Vancouver Community College's more equitable and progressive model for Part Time teachers in which compensation is provided for holding office hours, preparing course material, grading papers, supervising practicums, and tending to administrative duties. But of course, that's Canada, and we couldn't possibly do something like that here! It may even smack of socialism...

Mark Your Calendar **PCCFA General Membership Meetings** **(All are Welcome)**

March 19, 2009, Noon to One P.M. C-333

April 16, 2009, Noon to One P.M. C-333

May 21, 2009, Noon to One P.M. C-333

Against Campus Police Having Guns

The following letter is by a PCC faculty member in opposition to campus police carrying guns on campus. We have printed it in its entirety because of its eloquence and substance.

As a long time faculty member, I want to state that I am unequivocally opposed to our campus police carrying firearms. To their great credit, campus police have always successfully accomplished their work without firearms. Why should we change this policy? I have worked at PCC for over 25 years and have not witnessed the type of violence, or threat of armed violence, that would necessitate our police being equipped with firearms. In the absence of clear statistical proof, i.e. documented examples of our police and campus community being threatened by armed perpetrators of crime, there is no documented need to arm our police. A subjective feeling among officers that violence may happen is not sufficient reason to carry guns. The fact that other city police departments carry guns is not a reason that applies to our college campus. And the fact that an officer felt concerned because a student said she thought he was only a security guard (I refer to a recent article in the *Courier* quoting one of our officers who responded to a fistfight in the gym) is even less of a reason to carry guns. Guns are lethal weapons, not accessories to elevate officers' status in the eyes of the public. They are not designed to help officers feel more professional. They are designed to shoot people.

I think a valid case may be made that the fact that we have had such a low level of armed violence on this campus may be *because* our officers don't carry guns; therefore someone entering the campus with a bad intent doesn't feel the need to come to campus armed because they know they won't be facing armed opposition. This obviously is an untested theory, but there is just as much proof that this is valid as the point of view that any day now someone will start shooting at our police. It just hasn't happened and until it does, there are many existing means of non-lethal force that can be and should be examined. Additionally, there is the inescapable fact that violent acts are frequently committed in areas where there are armed police. This campus is too big for there to be an armed officer on every corner and that is not a sight that anyone wants to see anyway. Having armed police cannot always stop violent acts, but it can certainly create a campus environment that is antithetical to the goals of much of the college community. Calm logic, documented facts, and a thorough examination of alternatives needs to inform this very important decision.

It must be recognized that police and civilians often have very different points of view. I would guess that most police think that the presence of guns and uniformed officers will make civilians feel safer. The reality for many of us is exactly the opposite. I very much dislike the increase in uniforms on campus. Cadets no longer look like students—they look like police officers. They used to be friendly but vigilant adjuncts for public safety and assistance. They wore khakis and polo shirts labeled “cadet.” Now, in uniforms, some are noticeably more officious and have adopted a different, less friendly attitude. Walk anywhere in Pasadena—this includes the neighborhoods of Pasadena with ample evidence of violence—and you will not see the concentration of uniformed police (this includes our cadets in uniform) that you see on the PCC campus. A recently hired Dean told me that when she first visited PCC, she saw so many uniformed people that first impression was that this must be a dangerous place. Exactly! Why are so many police needed (and the cadets look and act like police, not students) unless this is a threatening environment? Adding guns only furthers this impression with potentially deadly consequences. PCC is not a violent place and it never has been. It is a wonderful place and should be in the business of welcoming students and staff, not making them feel intimidated. It is not time to extend the policing of PCC; it is time to rethink whether we have already gone too far.

