

Los Angeles College Faculty Guild
AFT Local 1521
West L.A. College
Chapter Meeting November 20, 2008

Welcome and Introductions: Chapter President, Olga Shewfelt welcomed Board of Trustees, Kelly Candaele, Angela J. Reddock, Nancy Pearlman, and Miguel Santiago, who came to talk about the District issues and about their impending campaigns for re-election. Olga gave the floor to Dr. Rocha for a brief presentation.

Mark Rocha: The college president expressed his gratitude to the Board of Trustees, stating that they have greatly helped the college. He noted joy about the passage of Prop J in the sad context of a deepening economic crisis in the state. He noted that we can expect midyear cuts and a reduction in our base for funding next year, about \$2 million. That means that some of our expected growth next year will not be funded. He thanked Olga for all the budget information she had distributed in her packet to the members assembled. While all need to step up, he said, there is no need to panic. He expects that we can “steer through this without [fulltime faculty or staff] layoffs,” by prioritizing revenues and expenditures. Adjunct faculty will, however, experience cuts in classes offered.

He read from his famous and greatly regarded Weekly Message and there was not a dry eye in the room. He called for a community of support and expressed concern about our emotional and spiritual wellbeing. He suggested the establishment of “talking circles” as support for the West Family.

Q & A

Q (Bonnie Blustein): Cuts in sections will affect adjunct faculty and mean layoffs, right?
A. (M.R.): We have a surge in enrollment. This is not the “same old” budget crisis. We are fortunate to have budget enhancements.

Q (Olga Shewfelt): What is the college’s strategy for Winter and Summer Intersessions?
A (M.R.): The college is already trimming low enrolled classes for Winter. He has asked the deans to find where the college can be most productive. Online course offerings help. He hopes to hold on to most of the planned Spring offerings, but stressed the need for efficiency. Summer Intersession may expect cuts. He hopes to move on RFRs for development of our land holdings in 2009 to increase revenues. He also expects to see increases in F1 Visa students, and therefore the fee revenues they pay.

Q. (Rod Patterson): As we have reached a goal of 8,185 FTES, are we still aiming for 10,000 FTES in this economic environment?
A. (M.R.): He cited SB 361. Unfunded growth for three consecutive years will trigger a re-calibration of base funding. He feels that we may have to make some reductions in the rate of growth but looks forward to the re-basing of our funding after the three year

period. If we reach 10,000 students, we will not have to hire more administration or staff. Growth is our means to survive and thrive.

Measure J: Olga noted the 70 % approval margin for the measure and stated that WLAC played an important role in passing this bond measure. West had fourteen student interns participate in the Member-To-Member Outreach program with the County Federation of Labor. The interns earned a \$500.00 stipend and gained experience manning phone banks and walking precincts. They called only union members and visited only union homes.

Board of Trustees: Four Trustees were present and were introduced by John McDowell, who stated that it is very important to re-elect these four BoT candidates, who all face stiff competition. Kelly Candalele is the current president of the BoT, and was first elected in 1997, and since re-elected twice. He stated that we may have passed a tipping point in building and re-building our campuses. He urged cooperation in this time of economic stress and to make this time of crisis one that claims a redemptive space in history. Nancy Pearlman is a former Anthropology professor here at West. She stressed the need for the LACCD to continue to be a leader in green buildings and high technology. Angela J. Reddock was appointed to the BoT in April of 2007. She shared in West's 2007 graduation and lives in nearby Westchester. She is a strong supporter of access and success. Miguel Sanchez replaced Warren Furutani in April of this year. As a community organizer born of immigrant parents, he hopes to impact the communities served by the LACCD. He noted the "stacked" organized opposition's electoral strategy to exhaust the incumbent candidates' funding in order to make it to a run-off election.

Q & A

Q (Bruce Anders): The college president plans to continue unfunded enrollment growth. This will entail larger classes with corresponding adjunct layoffs. What is the BoT's plan?

A: These decisions are left to the campuses. There is a district level hiring freeze. Retirement and health benefits will be preserved. Contracts of some outside vendors will be deleted. We need to manage growth sensibly and advocate for a new funding model, one that takes us away from the K-12 funding formula, despite the loss of Prop 92. The BoT can use its relationships with legislators and unions to bring some relief to the economic crisis. The area community colleges and the colleges throughout the state must lobby massively to get legislators' help.

Q. (Bonnie Blustein): The state spends large amounts of money on its prison system, including a large cost to incarcerate non-violent and low level drug offenders. Why not have a campaign based on "Schools not jails"?

A. Agree. The state needs to look at its overall funding model.

Q. (Student): How can we preserve support programs like the book voucher program?

A. This is a local decision of the college, and the students should have a voice in this and other decisions. Check with the ASO to be sure that it participates in governance decisions.

Q (Student) How do you feel about the quality of counseling in the district and how would you improve it?

A. The hiring freeze presents a dilemma, as we need more counselors. Counseling is inadequate and the BoT has had to make changes, recently; however, such actions are rare. Counseling departments must take the initiative to change and improve.

Q. (What is the Board's position on fee increases?

A. The Board is against increases, but an increase will likely happen. The revenues from this will not come back to the colleges but will be used to close the gap in the general fund.

Q (Norma Barragan): How will the overwhelming support for Measure J affect the support we may expect for our colleges' programs?

A. The passage of J by a large margin reflects our popularity with the voters. Now, we need a consistent and calibrated message to tap into the reservoir of good will.

Q (Rod Patterson): He cited Governor David Patrick (Mass.) who has an economic stimulus plan for his state. Will we look beyond California for solutions?

A. We could cultivate out-of-state enrollment; however, we do not yet have the technological capacity to do this very well.

Prop J/RFQs: Olga called attention to the list of Prop J (Requests for Quotation) projects on pages 27-28 of the packet distributed to members present, including Allied Health/PE Recreation and Wellness Center, Safety and Security; the Watson Center; the Teaching and Technology Center; the second parking structure; athletic fields with neighbor (noise) mitigation; the Plant Facilities Center; the new campus entrance and access modernization; the adjacent property purchase; and the transportation plan to create a shuttle service for students to and from West. Grand total for these projects is listed at \$322, 352, 281. This includes ADA compliance, Technology, Energy, and a potential site for a satellite office. A timeline for the RFQ-evaluation process for 10100 Jefferson Blvd property is as follows: President appoints evaluation panel and panel's orientation(11/6/'09); review period, including PPV analysis of proposals (11/7 – 12/3); evaluation panel's recommendations to president (12/4); president reports to BoT (12/17).

District Sheriff's Taskforce: Darrell Eckersley (Chief Grievance Officer) and Jan Allen (a consultant for the district) reported and answered questions. An incident last year at Trade Tech College led to the formation of this taskforce. Ms. Allen, a member of the Citizens' Review Board in San Diego was hired as a consultant to study and make recommendations to improve the relations between the County Sheriff's Dept. and the nine campuses. Two goals are: Friendlier approaches and policing and a formal system to file complaints. Ms. Allen has toured all nine campuses and has met with their presidents and administrations. She is now in the process of scheduling meetings with

faculty, staff, and students. She asked questions and received answers and other questions from those present, and she left a questionnaire to fill out.

Q & A

Q Do you feel safe here at West?

A There have been numerous thefts recently. A WEC member noted that a staff person's car was jumped upon on B Street by vandals.

Q Who controls the Sheriffs?

A There is a monthly Sheriff's report at the Joint Council meeting. This information is passed on to the entire college. VP Oester meets with the Sheriffs detachment. The college's president wants friendly cautious approaches to students.

Other information on the Sheriff's Office: All nine college campuses are a unit of the Sheriff's Dept. The headquarters is at City College, where Ralph Webb is the Captain for all nine colleges. The Sheriff's deputies have to follow the laws, including the penal code and must not violate their training, which is on-going. They must attempt to be less confrontational than they have been. Sheriff Bacca is completely omitted to the contract between his department and the district. Chair of the WEC, Jack Ruebensaal stated that the college needs an overall logistics plan, and several faculty said that it was a bad decision to move the Sheriff's office to Lot 5, as this is much too remote from the campus. Many aired frustration at the three different levels of authority in the Sheriff's contingent, signaled by three different colors of uniforms. Others noted that the Sheriff's deputies should patrol the campus and not be stationary. Two faculty members expressed strong concerns about firearms carried by the Sheriff's workers. A common concern arose: The campus is growing physically larger and larger, also, in terms of numbers of students, but there has been no corresponding growth of the Sheriff's personnel. Some faculty commented that shifts change at very inconvenient times, in the evening, when classes let out. A final and very big concern was how we may be able to communicate during an emergency. It was noted that the district is looking at an emergency alter system.