

*West Los Angeles College Chapter
AFT Local 1521
Minutes of March 26, 2009*

M. Jane McMaster, Alice Taylor, Nancy Sander, Betty Jacobs, James Ulrich, Jack Rubensaal, May DuBois, Bonnie Blustein, Emmette Braggs, Eric Ichon, Beraki Woldeaimanot, Mashairi Muir, Ray Bottenfield, Richrd Block, Curt Riesberg, Andy Lim, Eloise Crippens, David Newell, Ken Lin, Coccid, Jane, Swaminatham, Vidya, Robertson, Matt, Anders, Bruce, Shewfelt, Olga

Guests: Sprague, Bob, Rocha, Mark, Oester, John

Olga Shewfelt called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and called on college president Mark Rocha for remarks. West has 107.7 fulltime faculty and will conduct ten searches for seven additional fulltime faculty to be on board for Fall 2009. This level of hiring will help the district fulfill its Fulltime Faculty Obligation Number (FON) move closer to the 75% fulltime faculty per formula in state law. At the request of the AFT Chapter President regarding the FPIP process, a March 3rd memorandum was distributed to those present from Dr. Rocha to Rod Patterson and Phyllis Morrison states: “The Chancellor has required West to fulfill its FON...by hiring seven new fulltime faculty for Fall 2009 in addition to the number of any retirements that occur.” The searches will be conducted in the priority order as follows:

1. Dental Hygiene
2. Counselor
3. Physics
4. Counselor
5. CEMA
6. Fire Technology
7. Counselor
8. Child Development
9. English
10. P.E.

Olga commented that it would be a good idea to distribute the list to the faculty together with the rationale for these hires. The union will, she said, participate fully in the next cycle of the FPIP process. Mark Rocha stated that he agrees that the Senate should promulgate the list and the process used in arriving at it. Bonnie Blustein asked the president how the college prioritizes administrative positions. What in its process is analogous to the FPIP process? The president replied that FPIP hires are paid by general revenue funds, where as “many administrators” are paid on Specially Funded Programs. He noted that he looks at Program Review and consults the College Council before making decisions to hire administrators. Bruce Anders asked why the administration has requested to divide the final choices of faculty hires into five categories, such as transfer, career-technical, pre-collegiate, etc. He replied that the process now is “vertical” and

shuts out all but a few departments, and that some will not even request new faculty. The segmenting into fifths adds a horizontal dimension to the process.

Budget Issues: Olga reminded the meeting that some revenue measures will have to be approved by the voters to assure that the recent budget compromise can take effect and close the budget gap of \$8 million. VP John Oester reported that the District Office may cut further than it already has, and that we should know by May 15th, the state budget revision date. A continuing \$8 billion deficit would mean a \$4 million hit to K-14, but there is the hope of backfills from the expected stimulus funds from the federal government. Despite enrollment growth, the state will not fund growth above three percent; however, we could get more for growth if other colleges in the district grow below the three percent ceiling. Earlier, the district had rescinded a promise to fund all growth. Reduction in sections, 2009: In December of 2008, the college had planned to offer 1,043 sections in Spring 2009. The actual total was only 789. Two-hundred and forty-eight of the 254 cancelled sections were adjunct sections or 98%.

Board of Trustee Elections: Kelly Candaelle (Seat 4) and Miguel Santiago (Seat 7) won their incumbent elections; however Angela Reddock (Seat 2) and Nancy Pearlman (Seat 6) will be in run-off elections. Olga stated that we need to work to re-elect these two trustees as they share our values.

Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA): Olga referred to an article in Perspective: The EFCA “would allow workers to form a union by the simple, expeditious, and democratic method of ‘majority signup –if fifty percent plus one sign cards, they have a union. And, if they prefer, they can still ask for a secret ballot election. But the employer can’t” (Perspective 03/’09 p.4). The act would change the mode of elections favorable to manipulations by employers mandated by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act. Senator Dianne Feinstein has announced her opposition to the bill. Union supporters of this bill should send Senator Feinstein their handwritten letters to disagree with her and urge her support.

Health Benefits Possible Changes: Olga referred to the March 12th letter from Carl Friedlander, Carolyn Widener, and Susan Aminoff on prospective changes in our healthcare benefits and their rationale. The letter makes clear that while the union is “committed to lifetime coverage for eligible retirees, to having the employer pay all the premiums, and to offering a choice of plans, including PPO,” changes are necessitated and inevitable because of the convergence of steeply rising costs and demographic risks. “Our plan of 7,000 members is currently 43% retirees.” Therefore, the union is looking at a bigger more diverse group in the CalPERS Health Care program. The letter emphasizes the opinion that the Blue PPO plans have “become unsustainable,” but we can control when and how we make changes. In addition to the letter, Olga called the meeting’s attention to a Frequently Asked Questions sheet and a “2009 Basic HMO Plan Benefit Design Comparison” chart. She reported that Susan Aminoff and Don Sparks will be at the April 23rd Chapter meeting on campus.

CFT National Conference: Olga attended this in Miami in March. At a workshop in federal healthcare, she learned that healthcare costs continue to grow at than 2.5 times more than inflation. Seven percent is the inflation threshold above which the healthcare

system will be completely undermined. Bonnie Blustein stated that we need to stop talking about how we're going to sacrifice and start talking about how we're going to fight back, on healthcare. Olga also went to a workshop on SLOs and accrediting agencies presented by AFT President, Marty Hittleman. The question explored was how far and what authority the accrediting commissions have with respect to mandating SLOs in faculty evaluations. The CFT is preparing a lawsuit on evaluation of faculty members which uses SLOs. Hittleman insists that evaluation should be a local issue and is a union issue, not an accreditation issue.

Spring Enrollment: VP Bob Sprague distributed a Spring 2007, '08, and '09 Headcount Comparison, which tracks and compares headcount daily from day one through, now, day forty-four of the three Spring terms. As of 3/24/'09 our total headcount is 11,103, which is 107.7%... of previous Spring, same date.

Revenue Enhancing Initiatives: VP Sprague spoke about four proposed grants to develop revenue producing programs supported by the grant funds that their award would generate. With one exception (an ISA), these would require the hiring of six new deans to be funded by these special funds. All the positions would have terminating contracts, based on the terminal date of the grant. Expiring grants, however, could be absorbed by Program 100. He stated that a delineation of functions agreement with the Teamsters union, requires deans, not faculty to be hired into these positions, which require accounting, contracting, and supervision. Eight percent of grant funds would be skimmed from the top and put into the General Fund. He detailed four proposed projects, and each entails several activities; for example the development of off-site locations includes the LAX site, and the Wilshire site as well as training sites for cinema, allied health centers, etc.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>Deans</u>
Grant Development	\$4.8 million	1
Development of Off-campus Sites	\$5.5 million	2
Career-Tech and TRIO	\$7.6 million	2
International Education	\$2.25 million	1 + 1 ISA

Bruce Anders suggested that faculty, staff, and community input are needed and urged that the proposals be put onto the website with an invitation for comments. Olga called out attention to the hiring timeline that has already begun. She also noted that this is a tremendous opportunity which may raise some \$20 million, about two-thirds of our \$32 million General Revenue budget. In effect, she said, this is a new college on top of the already existing college. How are these two colleges to connect? Each Division, should be able to connect and integrate these proposals. She urged Bob to keep us informed and to let us know of evolving opportunities. Bob agreed and said that the Obama budget presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attract federal and state funds.

Work Environment Committee: Jack Rubensaal reported on the WEC. Mark Rocha is resisting the faculty resolution passed at the February meeting, urging that the new parking building and all parking facilities on campus, maintain spaces dedicated to faculty and staff. He feels that current lots accommodate faculty and staff adequately. Olga advised Jack to get some data regarding these spaces and their locations. Jack also reported that WEC had advised that speed bumps be installed in the parking structure, to discourage speeding by students. He also reported that students do not think that it is worthwhile to buy parking passes, and that some are trading their daily passes to other students. There are waits of up to 30 minutes to get a space and visitors have been required to pay entrance fees as well as students. Eloise Crippens and others noted that the structure is dirty and littered and unsafe.

Building Management Committee: Jack Rubensaal and Alice Taylor reported. The new PE Building will be the first design-built building on campus. An environmentally sound building with a platinum and glass front and an umbrella roof, it will house Allied Health, Probation, and will have a Dance Studio, all designed by the occupants in cooperation with the architects. The Lot 7 land use issue was tabled, but the original six companies who presented their qualifications are still interested. The postponement was needed to get the word out more about the availability of this land. There is concern about the lease length of 66 years. Olga has called for a comparison with a thirty year lease and asks for experts to enter the discussion.

Distance Learning/Information Technology: The college will conduct its own study of the effectiveness of having 80 students in online classes, and the results should be available by June. The Information Technology Committee will become a college committee, not a Senate Committee. Its chair will be elected, not appointed by the Senate.

Planning Committee: The new Planning Committee met on March 23rd, for the first time. Olga attended as did Adrienne Foster for the union. The union proposes that the Planning Committee deal with the entire budget and synchronize planning with budget. The previous Planning Committee was restricted to planning for the use of the small set-aside funds. The new committee should have a college-wide view. A draft of the proposed changes to this committee's charge will be presented to the College Council by Rebecca Tillberg, Dean of Research.