

AFT 1521 West LA College Chapter Meeting
February 23, 2012

Attendance: Faz Elahi; Norma Barragan; Bonnie Blustein; Kenneth Taira; Fran Leonard; Laura Peterson; Kevin Considine; Jack Ruebensaal; Richard Olivas; Betty Jacobs; Nancy Sander; Art Camplone; Casey Hunter; Vidya Swaminathan; Timmothy Russell; William Bucher; Olga Shewfelt; Bruce Anders.

Guests: Betsy Regalado; Ken Takeda; Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh.

Olga Shewfelt, Chapter President, convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. in the Winlock Room. She began by noting that the faculty needs to know more about the college's Foundation. She reported on recent budget developments, including the "February Surprise". She directed the chapter to a memorandum issued by the Community College League of California, which notes that the California community colleges learned that they are likely to face an additional \$149 million cut in the current fiscal year. This is on top of the \$313 million in cuts in 2011-12 and the \$102 million in triggered cuts in January. Before this latest surprise cut, the colleges were operating with 23% less funding as compared to the 2008-'09 fiscal year, and have had to reduce enrollments by 284,000 FTES. Per student funding has dropped by \$554 per student.

Olga then called our attention to the District's Budget Planning Guidelines, which is intended to "protect its core educational programs, reduce expenditures, and minimize impact to programs and services." The four principles are:

1. Implement conservative fiscal policies
2. Protect the District's Core Mission
3. Minimize impact on employees
4. Increase alternative revenue sources

Every college will have to follow these guidelines.

These guidelines are the basis for a Proposed Contingency Plan based upon three assumptions: 1) a potential \$30.5 million reduction to the base if the November tax initiative fails; 2) No COLA or growth revenues; and 3) a projected \$66 million balance carried forward from 2011-'12. In the Proposed Contingency Plan, each college would be required to cut 7.08% (1.52% + 5.56%). That cut would reduce the total projected funds available by \$54,345,157 (based upon a final 2011-'12 budget of \$597,901,227 and a revised preliminary budget for 2012-'13 of \$543,555,070). West's 7.08% cut would result in a budget of \$26,133,357, down from \$28,417,008, in 2011-'12.

The Proposed Contingency Plan also contains plans to conduct program variability studies “to insure that all instructional programs that (sic) lead students to succeed; an update of staffing plans to “to include potential transfer/reassignment;” a consideration of “furloughs and other compensation/workload adjustments; and an “evaluation of intercollegiate athletic programs.”

President Nabil said that the college needs to have a plan in place in case the tax initiative fails. He suggested that the yearlong plan include Summer '13, so that this might be cut if necessary. It was noted that while the election is in November, classes begin two months earlier, in September. If programs are eliminated, these will have to be cut in fall, not spring. Nabil stated that everything must be on the table and options should be prioritized. Olga noted that much of this planning would have to be done by June 2012, and Nabil noted that we will have more information by mid-May, the time of the May revision of the state budget. Ken Takeda, VPA, stated that the college may choose to do cuts in between the minimums and maximums and that they will be done in consultation with governance bodies. The Board's priority is to conserve all human resources.

There is a new budget allocation model which will determine how 20% or less of all FTES funds will be disbursed among the nine LACCD colleges. A portion of money will be set aside for administration (\$2 million at each college) and the remainder of the 20% will be disbursed on the basis of each college's built square footage. A calculation of each college's full- to part time faculty ratio was proposed by Olga, but not accepted for the allocation model.

The Guild endorsed the “Millionaire's Tax to Restore Funding for Education and Essential Services Act of 2012”. The Act will be on the November ballot alongside the Governor's own tax initiative.

Olga asked Nabil to discuss the West LA College Foundation. Nabil described the Foundation as an autonomous, non-profit body to support West LA College. With the exception of someone who is paid \$200.00 to do the accounting, no one is paid. The Foundation does not do active fundraising events. Olga asked the president to let the Guild know who Foundation members are and where and when meetings take place.

Betsy Regalado discussed student discipline. “We are a safe campus,” she stated and invited Guild members to look at statistics on the college's website. She stated that she wants to be “a helpful partner” to faculty in matters involving student discipline. Dean Shalomon Duke initially handles student discipline cases. She said that in case an Instructor feels threatened, s/he should contact the Sheriff, immediately. A faculty member suggested that the Sheriff's staff meet with faculty to discuss how to handle such threats, and referenced such an instant in her

department last year. She noted a call, in front of an aggressive student was risky. Olga also noted instances during which faculty did not know how to act when threatened. Betsy stated that such a meeting would be a good idea and she further suggested that the Instructor could say that she is calling her supervisor and that a pre-determined code word or phrase could be used to alert the Sheriff to the situation. Jack Ruebensaal said that there was a lot of discussion about these issues in the Work Environment Committee. He added that he thinks that the faculty should have ID cards and noted that the Sheriff has stopped faculty members they did not recognize and asked them to produce identification. Olga said that an alternative to ID cards would be to supply the Sheriff with a faculty list. Jack also noted the occurrence of graffiti and vandalism in the new buildings. One faculty member noted that in the General Classroom building, while the doors are opened before morning classes begin, there is no security at that time or during passing between classes or when classes end. This puts the high tech equipment in the classrooms at risk for theft and vandalism. Another Instructor suggested that Classified employees also be invited to any workshop on campus security and discipline issues. She also raised the civil rights issues around LAPD's Special Order 11, a directive that provides for "Suspicious Activity Reporting".

Olga is planning a panel discussion in her class in conjunction with the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute's labor curriculum initiative. The panel discussion will be on the topic of labor participation in elections, and will take place on March 29th from 12:45 – 2:45. The panel will feature the Political Director of the County Federation of Labor, among others.

Olga discussed the Member Emergency Relief Fund (MERF), a successful pilot program begun, last fall, by Olga, to assist adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty may receive emergency assistance of up to \$500.00, and/or may receive online training reimbursements or tuition reimbursements in the amount of \$200.00. To qualify for these benefits the applicant must be a union member, a temporary adjunct faculty member (without a fulltime job); on a seniority list; and have lost all Spring '12 assignments or have had assignments reduced by 50% compared to Fall '11. Application forms are available at aft1521.org.

Bruce reported on the impact of refusals on one's standing on a seniority list. He stated that three consecutive refusals or four refusals in five semesters will take the instructor's name off the seniority list. The need to review this and make it clear was the misconception of an instructor who this semester had accepted an hourly class, which was subsequently cancelled. His Division Chair then offered an alternative class to him, which he refused. The refusal was counted as his third consecutive refusal, as he had already refused classes offered the preceding two semesters. He argued that as he had accepted the class originally offered to him this semester, he should not receive an "R" this semester, even though he had refused the subsequent offer. That interpretation is erroneous

Jack Ruebensaal noted that the Work Environment Committee has vacancies for members and that the meetings are on the last Friday of the month, from 10:00 to 12:00. Whoever is chair of WEC, will have to also be a member of the Facilities Committee. Currently, the AFT rep to that committee is Kevin Consadine. Kevin noted that L.A. Build sent only three candidates for bids

on the moratorium projects, and that the Facilities Committee complained that the process was not broad enough.

Adjunct Rep elections will be held in May for a two year term. Div. Chair elections will also be held in May.

Olga summarized the recommendations from a “Host Committee” to spend \$80,000 raised by the college’s Foundation at the June Gala, 2011. She noted that while her name is listed on the committee, she chose not to participate in the evaluation of the proposals to spend the \$80,000. The reason for her lack of participation was her objections to the role of the Host Committee in selecting the proposals, instead of the institutionally established College Council.. These recommendations were:

- \$18,000 for a photocopier machine for the administration in CE
- \$10,000 for “event supplies”
- \$9,000 for the Leadership Retreats (2011-’13)
- \$18,000 for Reading Apprenticeship training
- \$16,000 for a digital design studio
- \$7,300 for the Instructional Media Dept.
- \$3,700 for Physics area upgrades

Olga noted that the recommendations came to the full College Council at the union’s insistence at the CC Executive Committee meeting on January 14th. The three Union representatives were joined by one other Council member in voting against these recommendations, because of objections to the ones that would not go more directly to support teaching and learning at the college. The vote was a close 6 – to – 4 vote. Bruce noted that of the twelve persons named to the Host Committee four were administrators, one a program director, and five were faculty. No students were members, and faculty represented only four of twelve divisions. He said that he found the process to be eccentric and unrepresentative, and was a reward to Gala donors and workers, “in exchange for” (in the words of their memo) their investment and efforts.” In a final round of voting, seven members and one unnamed alternate had four votes each, to cast. It was noted that the photocopier machine expenditure received only four votes.

An issue about voting in the Senate came up in relation to the previous discussion. It was noted by two Senate members present, that votes are skewed by the presence of numerous administrators who attend the meetings, and speak freely from the floor. One specific concern that emerged was how the Oversight Committee was appointed. Another concern was the apparent ignoring of a hard-fought Senate resolution to make much of the pedestrian mall a “free speech area”. It was noted that the college president has allowed only a very small portion of the mall for free speech activities. One member stated that the president should have provided a written statement to the Senate, detailing why he did not support the faculty’s recommendation.

