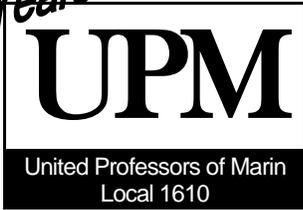


37 Years Strong!



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Volume XXXVI No. 8, August 2011

Union Press

Ponderings of the President by Ira Lansing

While each semester is different in so many ways, after experiencing the start of a semester a few times, they are all fairly similar: classrooms and offices filled with fresh faces, eager and enthusiastic, excited about being in college (how long does that last!). However, this semester, for me, was different.

I often have full classes, especially in required transfer courses. Although first semester calculus usually has a healthy enrollment, for me it never has had a wait list—until this semester. I understand the state of the economy and how it drives people back to school, but really, calculus? So for the first time (depending on who actually shows up), I may have had to turn away students in that class (there was another section, so they would not be completely stranded). Denying students admission into a class is often difficult. As academicians we like to think we have our students’ best interests at heart. However, as anyone knows who has actually spent time working in a classroom or library or counseling office, there is a direct workload

associated with each individual. It is for this reason that our UPM Collective Bargaining Agreement addresses class size and the number of hours of work. Still, it can be difficult to turn away an eager (for how long?) face. What can you say to them that makes sense? All they hear and see is a denial of what is extremely important to them at that time, and we become the villains.

A member of the California Federation of Teachers (UPM’s State affiliate organization) in another district was equally tired of being the point person for her students’ frustrations. So this semester Phyllis Eckler created a handout that she gave to every student she had to turn away. Here is what she wrote and presented:

What Can I Do to Get the Classes I Need?

I wish I could enroll you in my class; however, the number of students that I can reasonably teach, assist, give feedback to and assess in this course has been reached. I wish I could help!

Continued on 2

I know how frustrating it is when you are trying to enroll in courses at our college and you keep finding that the classes are full. Here you are trying to get an education to move forward in your life and the doors to opportunity seem to keep slamming in your face.

The state of California has cut funding to our colleges even as they have raised fees. When the legislators and the governor cut funding for higher education what they are telling colleges is "You need to offer fewer classes and hire fewer teachers to teach them." This is what is impacting your access to classes.

However, there is something that YOU can do. You have a vote and your vote matters to the decision makers. You need to contact your legislator and let him or her know that you are upset. You can contact the legislators who represent your area for by going to: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>

Once you enter your address zip code it will give you the names of the legislators who want

your vote in the future. By clicking on their names and then on "contact us" you will be able to send them an e-mail. An even stronger impression is made if you mail them a letter or call their office. I urge you to make your opinions heard. Money for higher education and the availability of classes, whether at the community college, the Cal State Universities or the UCs is not going to improve until YOU make it a priority for the powers that be!

--Phyllis Eckler

I often tell our Union members who come to me with a non-contractual problem that until the problem is felt by their supervisor, it may not get resolved. Perhaps it is time to take the same approach with our students. Ms. Eckler distributed her letter for use on a CFT e-mail list, so feel free to reproduce it for your own use now and in the future. And perhaps it might be good for all of us to take her advice. After all, it is part of staying in touch, staying informed and staying involved.

Have a great semester.

UPM Committees and Staff

2011-2012

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Wanderings of the President

Wanderings of the President? Isn't it usually "Ponderings"? Yes, you're right. But Ira's not writing this one.

"So what's up with that?" you might ask. Well, this month Ira didn't get "Ponderings" to me as early as usual (He's normally always a week ahead of schedule), and since the press must go on, I thought, and since maybe he's uncharacteristically wandering about, I hacked out what follows... just in case. Of course, he got his article in on time anyway, but still, this needs to be said, so here goes.

Of all the people in UPM, of all the people at CoM, I'd say Ira has earned the right to wander. Ira's been President of our Union longer than most of us have been employed at CoM. He, along with Paul Christensen, has led the Union in all things contractual. The two of them, with support from Bargaining Team members, have produced one of the strongest contracts in the state, ensuring faculty rights, paying part-time instructors pro rata more than at any other California community college and giving part-time instructors health benefits when they teach six units in a semester.

A few years ago during winter break, I flew to Hawaii to help my dad who had suffered a heart attack while on vacation. On the flight over, I spoke with a young woman who, as an adjunct at City College in SF, was amazed to learn that CoM part-time instructors got benefits at six units. She said she'd never heard of anything like that before and wanted to apply for a teaching position at CoM. It dawned on me then that such things aren't just given to us. It's people like Ira (and Paul) who make them happen.

When I consider everything Ira does for us, my head spins. He attends every Board meeting, often advocating for faculty rights and better working conditions. He's our rep on the CRA Trust and on the Distance Education Committee and communicates regularly with the North Bay Labor Council. He takes countless calls and emails and always gives detailed and informed responses. He writes memos and press releases, and he's always available for interviews with news agencies or with other colleges. He spent countless hours preparing for and representing UPM in fact-finding, the longest fact-finding process in the history of California. He regularly speaks with Board members and potential Board candidates. He leads our general membership meetings, as well as the weekly UPM Executive Council meetings. He also spends hours on the phone or in person with attorneys when UPM needs legal advice.

Unfortunately, Ira's work does not always get the appreciation it deserves. He also hears complaints, criticisms and accusations. But he deals with them; he takes time for anyone and everyone.

I'm sure I don't see half of what Ira does as our Union president, but I'm certain that the part I do know about is twice as much as any of us would dare to take on in addition to our teaching duties. So this month when I didn't hear from Ira well before the newsletter deadline, I thought I'd write "Wanderings" and remind you to take a minute the next time you see Ira to say thanks for staying in touch and for keeping us informed and involved.

John Sutherland

CONNECTING THE DOTS

News and Opinion
by Arthur Lutz

GIFT HORSE

When horses get older their gums tend to recede, exposing more of the tooth surface. And so by looking at the length of horses' teeth an experienced observer can usually determine the age of the animal. Older horses, of course, are usually less valuable than younger ones so if you are given a horse as a gift it might not be wise to examine its teeth too closely because you might be disappointed with what you find, and upset with the person who gave you the gift.

In other words, ***"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth."***

Throughout history there have been many examples of gift horses – offerings that initially appeared valuable but which upon closer examination turned out to be of lesser value or worthless or even detrimental.

Perhaps the most famous of these gift horses is the offering that the Greeks left at the gates of Troy in 1190 BCE, a gift that the Trojans rejoiced in receiving and which they happily and trustingly carried into their city – leading to their destruction.

I'm concerned that we might be experiencing our own *Trojan Horse* here at College of Marin – a gift horse that on the surface appears highly desirable, but whose teeth we have not carefully examined.

I'm referring to the gift of the twenty-one new full-time faculty hires that Dr. Coon announced in his convocation speech earlier this month.

At first glance it would appear that these hires are a wonderful boon, helping to restore the ranks of our depleted full-time faculty, *"that will (as Dr. Coon remarked) breathe new life and energy into the college."*

But wait a minute. Dr. Coon went on to say, *"Let me emphasize that the vast majority of the positions we will be filling are not new positions. In fact, the units are currently being taught by our valued part-time faculty. What that means from a budgetary perspective is that we will be paying for these positions with existing instructional funds."*

Whoa! That in my view seems to be a *Trojan Horse*. It means that practically every new full-time position will be paid for by eliminating several of our part-time faculty. And since full-timers teach 15 units per semester and part-timers teach an average of 5 units per semester, ~sixty of our part-time colleagues will need to be eliminated in order to pay for these twenty-one hires. And even if most of these new positions are filled by current part-timers (by no means a certainty); over forty adjuncts who are currently teaching will not be with us when the hiring process is completed next year. Is this really the best way to *"breathe new life and energy into our college?"*

Continued on 5

Some of us believe that these new full-time hires should not be funded by redirecting resources away adjunct positions – they should be funded without eliminating what Dr. Coon calls, “*our valued part-time faculty.*” Is this financially feasible? The District seems to be able to find the money to pay for all kinds of administrative consultants and non-instructional services. Surely our adjunct faculty should be considered a higher priority.

How did this zero-sum *Trojan Horse* slip through the gates of CoM? It came about because for five years the Fran White administration fought (successfully) to remove faculty upgrading (Article 16) from our UPM Contract and assign it to the Academic Senate, who negotiated this new “budget-neutral” hiring process. So as a result of UPM no longer having the contractual authority to negotiate and protect part-time upgrades, many of our colleagues will be gone in a year.

There is no doubt that we need new full-time faculty and that the college should conform to the 75-25 mandate of the Education Code. And Dr. Coon should be praised for understanding the need to restore the ranks of our full-time teaching staff. But to pay for these new hires by eliminating up to sixty of our part-time colleagues is neither compassionate nor will it build morale on campus; nor does it serve the instructional needs of our students. If need be, we can repopulate the ranks of our full-time staff more slowly, without the wholesale decimation of an adjunct faculty who have served our college with distinction for years.

If you are disquieted by this new hiring arrangement, express your concerns to the officers of your Academic Senate who negotiated this zero-sum hiring process. Perhaps they can change it.

Keep in Touch with Your Union News

ww.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org



Letters to the Editor

Feel free to voice your comments and/or opinions concerning any Union related article or issue. Letters should be signed, but names will be withheld upon request.

Please direct your letters to
john.sutherland@marin.edu

UPM Student Grant

A few years back, UPM established an annual grant for students in need of emergency support. Please encourage disadvantaged students who need funds for books or other supplemental support to see Margaret Eliot in the College of Marin Foundation.

The UPM Fund currently has a balance of nearly \$1500 to assist students.

Evaluations and the Contract

Article 7

In the new Collective Bargaining Agreement, Evaluation procedures, responsibilities and team makeup have changed slightly, so if you are up for an evaluation, it might be a good idea to acquaint yourself with the new contract language. What follows here are some highlights of the changes, as well as some emphasis on how to prepare for and protect yourself during an evaluation.

In most cases, an Evaluation team comprises the evaluatee, a peer evaluator, a UPM advisor and a manager. **New to the contract is that the evaluatee must now request that a UPM advisor be present on the team.** If the evaluatee does not make said request, the evaluation will proceed without a UPM advisor. Also, the peer evaluator must be a “qualified, permanent unit member in the same or a closely related discipline who has not been previously evaluated by the Evaluatee.”

For full-time, permanent unit members, a manager is now part of the evaluation team, and “unannounced classrooms visits may occur as a management prerogative for supervisory oversight, but shall not be used as a part of the formal evaluation process” (CBA 7.0.1.2). However, since the Evaluation Team is made up of other members, any “unannounced classroom visits” by a manager alone may be in violation of the CBA. Thus, it is important to choose your team wisely.

Further, the new language states that “typed verbatim student evaluation

comments shall be provided to the Evaluatee in order to protect confidential identity of students.” This language begs the question as to who is responsible for typing the comments.

Also new is that “Temporary Credit or Non-Credit Unit Members may be subject to an additional evaluation at any time if a written student complaint form is presented to the District” (7.6.4). Though additional evaluations prompted by a formal student complaint may seem alarming initially, management already had the right to conduct follow-up evaluations, so this addition can actually help part-time unit members by allowing them to refute through teaching performance any formal student complaint claims.

One other protection that we should all keep in mind is that “every unit member shall have the right to inspect and inventory his/her personnel file upon request, provided that the request and inspection/inventory are made at a time other than the unit member's assigned hours, but during normal District business hours within 5 working days” (CBA 7.8.3.) If you suspect that something has been added to your personnel file, you have the right to investigate and look at your file.

Finally, these highlights are only that—highlights. We should all become thoroughly familiar with the rules and procedures concerning evaluations. If you are looking at being evaluated and need additional information, see Article 7 in your CBA today.

John Sutherland



CFT

Raoul Teilhet Scholarships

**FOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS and
CONTINUING
COLLEGE STUDENTS**

About the scholarship program

The scholarships were established in honor of former CFT President Raoul Teilhet, the charismatic leader of the union during the 1970s when California education employees won collective bargaining.

About the scholarship awards

Scholarships of \$3000 are awarded to students entering or attending a four-year university; \$1000 scholarships are awarded to students entering or attending a two-year school. The awards are based on academic achievement, financial need, special talents and skills, participation in extra-curricular activities, and a 500-word essay on a social issue about which the applicant feels strongly.

Who is eligible to apply

Scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and continuing college students who are children or dependents of CFT members in good standing, or children of deceased CFT members. High school seniors who received a Raoul Teilhet Scholarship are not eligible to apply for a continuing college scholarship.

How to obtain an application

To download a scholarship application, go to www.cft.org and click on Scholarships. To obtain a photocopy of the application, contact your local union. To have an application mailed to you, phone the CFT Costa Mesa Field Office.

**California Federation
of Teachers**
AFT, AFL-CIO 
A Union of Professionals

Costa Mesa Field Office
2900 Bristol St., Suite C107
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
T: 714/754-6638
F: 714/754-1514
www.cft.org



HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY
JANUARY 10, 2012

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY
JULY 1, 2012

UPM Membership Application

I hereby apply for membership in the United Professors of Marin, AFT Local 1610

Date: _____ Email: _____

Name _____ SS #: _____

Address: _____ Department: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Campus Ext.: _____

Check the appropriate category:

I am a permanent credit or non-credit employee or leave replacement.

I am a temporary non-credit employee on the quarter system.

I am a temporary credit or non-credit employee on the semester system.

Return to UPM Kentfield campus mailbox or UPM Office, Science Center 136

United Professors of Marin UPM-PAC Payroll Deduction Form

The UPM-PAC (Political Action Committee) provides financial support to candidates and measures that support or benefit education in Marin County and the College of Marin in particular. If you would like to support the UPM-PAC with a monthly contribution, small or large, please fill out the form below and send it to the Payroll Office.

To: Payroll, College of Marin

Date: _____

I hereby authorize the Marin Community College to deduct from my earnings the sum of _____ beginning in the month of _____, _____ (year), and each month thereafter, and to remit this sum to the United Professors of Marin PAC #990958 until I revoke this authorization in writing.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

SSN: _____