

Chabot-Las Positas Faculty Association (CLPFA)

FACULTY FOCUS

Volume VIII, Issue 1

March 2005

Spring 2005

Tuesday	January 18	Classes Start
Fri., Sat., Mon.	Feb. 18, 19, 21	Presidents' Weekend
Monday-Saturday	March 21-26	Spring Break ²
Saturday	May 21	Saturday Finals ³
Monday-Friday	May 23-27	Finals
Friday	May 27	Chabot's Graduation
Saturday	May 28	LPC's Graduation

2005-2006 Academic Calendar

Approved at the Board of Trustees' Meeting

November 16, 2004, Item 4.2

Fall 2005

Wednesday	August 17	Convocation Day
Thursday	August 18	Staff Development Day
Friday	August 19	College Day
Monday	August 22	Classes Start
Saturday	September 3	No Saturday Classes
Monday	September 5	Labor Day
Friday	November 11	Veterans' Day
Saturday	November 12	Saturday Classes Meet
Wed., Thur., Fri., & Sat	November 23, 24, 25 & 26	Thanksgiving Holiday ¹
Thursday-Wednesday	December 15-21	Finals

Spring 2006

Thursday	January 12	Semester Starts- Variable Flex Day
Friday	January 13	Variable Flex Day
Monday	January 16	Martin Luther King Holiday
Tuesday	January 17	Classes Start
Thursday	February 16	Mandatory Flex Day
Fri., Sat., & Mon	Feb. 17, 18 & 20	Presidents' Weekend ¹
Monday-Saturday	April 10-15	Spring Break ²
Saturday	May 20	Saturday Finals ³
Monday-Friday	May 22-26	Finals



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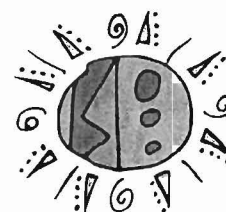
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Tim Dave, Part-Time Rep-Chabot

¹No Saturday Classes

²Saturday classes will be held on April 8, the Saturday preceding
Spring Break. Classes will not be held on Saturday, April 15.

³Extra time needs to be built into Saturday classes to accommodate for fewer days.

Our Governor versus Education and Retirement

By: Mark Newton-President FA, AFT 6157

Educators cannot afford to ignore Sacramento politics any longer. After the holidays drifted into rainy January days, I eagerly awaited Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's State of the State address and his proposed 2005-2006 state budget. The rumors had the state deficit increasing from six to eight to nine billion dollars. I had optimistically hoped that the Governor would suggest some bipartisan effort to address these serious fiscal issues -- perhaps a combination of budget cuts, pursuit of more federal funds, and temporary taxes. (Some critics claim that a tax on the rich would easily make up the deficit, but who knows?) Instead, I was dismayed to find that he believes that much of California's financial mess is the fault of overpaid teachers, state employees, and their unions. What follows is my interpretation of parts of the Schwarzenegger plan, with emphasis on education.

The Governor's plan. During his State of the State address, the Governor was typically charming as he told California that he would defy the "professional politicians" (read Democratic Legislators) and "special interests" (read Labor Unions). He further stated that he would go directly to the voters for more power if the legislature would not help him with his stated agenda: 1) fix the schools, 2) reduce extravagant spending, 3) redistrict the state so that elections aren't rigged to reelect the incumbent and 4) reform state pensions. Five days later, Schwarzenegger released his proposed state budget, putting his words to action. Parts of his plan are not pretty for education and other state workers.

My interpretation of his plan. My translation of the Governor's agenda which if enacted, and that is a long way from happening, would hit teachers squarely in the pocketbook. First, by fixing the schools, he plans to ignore California's incredibly low spending per pupil; I have heard that California Community colleges again rank around 48th, and our K-12 are in the bottom quarter in the country in education spending per student. He proposes to suspend full proposition 98 funding (\$1.1 billion) to K-14 for the second year in a row; and not return the money suspended from last year (\$2.2 billion total expected).

Interestingly, with this action the Governor broke a deal made with California Teacher's Association last year. Further, Schwarzenegger hopes to alter the state constitution to lower the funds mandated for education in the future; and he will seek the power to make across the board cuts (including K-12 and community colleges) whenever revenues are insufficient. For good measure he proposes to convert teacher raises into merit pay, and to end tenure, because he believes the trouble with education is bad teachers -- not insufficient resources.

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General Membership Meetings 2004-2005

Chabot College, Room 1904, 12-1 pm

March 31

April 21

May 19

LPC, Staff Lounge, 2:30-4 p.m.

TBA

Please come join in. Your input is welcomed and necessary!

NEGOTIATIONS: COMING UP !!!

By Charlotte Lofft

Our current contract expires on June 30 of this year. The FA has been extremely active in generating new ideas for contract improvements. We have worked on proposals for over a year in an effort to be prepared, and we are ready to get started. We expect to start this summer with several negotiation sessions.

We will come to the table with an open mind and will do our own research regarding budget matters and other economic issues. We have some excellent faculty resources in these areas, and we expect to hire a consultant to assist us with some matters.

We will keep you informed every step of the way. Expect a meeting of all faculty on Convocation Day to give you a progress report from summer negotiations.



Continued from page 2.

Second, Schwarzenegger has embraced his political party's "no tax increase" refrain, and proposes across the board cuts in service and funding. Third, he would like to make it easier to elect more legislators of his own political party by launching a new redistricting effort. Finally, he proposed creation of a two-tiered pension system for state employees, with those individuals hired after July 2007 relying on only a 401K/403B type system. Instead of having a defined benefit, their retirement would be financed solely by their investments; and they need to hope that the stock market does not have a downturn or that they do not encounter some bad/unethical financial advice. (Remember, those are your children and grandchildren and their teachers.) The Governor also proposes to end the state's contribution to the State Teacher's Retirement System (STRS), shifting \$40 million of new costs to community colleges, and very likely some of it to instructors.

Budget details. Some of the basic points of the proposed budget as it affects education are as follows:

- The Community College portion of the reduced Proposition 98 funds increase from 10.25 to 10.35 percent.
- 3.0 percent (\$195.5 million) growth
- 3.93 percent (\$136.7 million) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)
- \$20 million for community college vocational link to K-12
- A "set-aside" of \$31.4 million as possible restoration of last year's lost Partnership For Excellence funds
- \$263 million in state bond funds for 50 community college construction projects
- Changes in Cal Grants and Financial Aid may benefit community college students (and be tougher on students at private universities).
- Community College fees remain at \$26 per unit
- No equalization funds (does not affect SJECCD that much)
- Reduction of \$469 million from the general fund as school districts and community colleges take over the STRS contribution. A note makes it clear that eventually Schwarzenegger wants instructors to pay for their own retirement contributions, and he proposes a two percent raise for those participating teachers.

What does all this mean? I can only speculate as to what all this talk means. For the community colleges, the news is mixed. Our students do not have to endure a third consecutive tuition increase, and grants may become more available. The Governor's budget reflects increases in the general funds and property tax increases so as to raise the California community college budget by 7.5 percent (\$359 million) in Proposition 98 funding, and a 6.2 percent increase overall. The COLA is healthy. On the other hand, these increases are only a fraction of what would have come our way if Schwarzenegger had adhered to his deal with CTA. The transfer of the retirement contribution to local school and college districts is huge and onerous, and if it goes through as proposed, will eat away substantially at the increases.

Governor Schwarzenegger's positions for the future may be more frightening than the budget itself. Tactically, the Governor's speech was brilliant; his popularity and magnetism will make a lot of the public believe that the problem with our education system is bad teachers and the Democratic Legislature that keeps trying to fund it. Just once I would like to be able to say "let me try" to a politician who tells me we can't fix our schools and colleges by throwing money at them.

It is still a long way to the May revise of the proposed budget and longer still until its passage. This process will be ugly. Funds are apparently pouring in from the East Coast to fund initiatives that our Governor has mentioned, as well as two initiatives to limit union rights in public education. California Federation of Teachers (CFT) is talking strongly about the need to take on these initiatives. It appears that the fall election could be enormously important to education in this state. Your voices will need to be heard.

Deciphering Sacramento – It's Time to Get Serious

By Tim Dave and Jonathan Lightman

For those of us who teach at Chabot and Las Positas our plate is so often full with teaching, committee work, special projects, etc. that we do not have the time to focus on wider issues affecting our District, our college, and ultimately the vary classes we teach.

BUT WE SHOULD!

Are you closely following the news in Sacramento? More precisely, are you prepared to fight for community colleges, and your future?

There's a new reality in Sacramento and we need to get used to it. We survived eight years of the drill sergeant Pete Wilson, five years of the "pay-to-play" Gray Davis and one year of the "rise above the partisan divide" Arnold Schwarzenegger.

This year's version of the Governor is much different – more partisan, more determined and less forgiving.

We all took several deep breaths during the State of the State, where we were told that the problems in this state were public employee pensions, education funding, teacher tenure and legislative districts. The message was reinforced a few days later when the Chief Executive told the *Sacramento Bee* that his intention was not to "feed the monster."

In all fairness, the Governor's budget, released a few days following the State of the State, treats community colleges generously for next year's budget. We're slated for a 7.5 percent increase, comprised of three percent growth, and a relatively high 3.93 percent COLA (which might decline later in the budget process). This is all accomplished without a student fee hike.

Peeling back the layers reveals a different story. With the blessing of the California Teachers Association and other major K-12 interests, the Governor permanently rebenched Proposition 98 (K-12 and community college funding) by \$2 billion to pass this year's budget. There were three problems with that deal:

- 1) While the \$2 billion ultimately gets repaid, it's done on a one-time basis (it should be ongoing annual education spending);
- 2) When the money gets repaid, it goes to the K-12 revenue limit; community colleges don't get their share. So we lose even our share of the one-time \$200 - \$210 million.

Continued on page 5.

Jonathan Lightman



Tim Dave



HUMAN RESOURCES: DESIGNATED FACULTY CONTACT

This is just a reminder that faculty are to contact Tina Miller directly for most Human Resource (HR) matters. Anything related to benefits should be addressed to Alice Noriega. Please make a note of these designations.

Thank you, C. Lofft

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- 3) Ultimately, the Administration decided to break the deal with the K-12ers. They'll repay the \$2 billion, but they want to permanently rebench another \$2.3 billion, and never repay it. That's a loss of another \$230 - \$253 million per year to the community colleges.

There's still more to the story. The Governor proposes to permanently eliminate the state's share of the contribution to CalSTRS, which amounts to approx. \$35 million for community colleges. While districts will have initial responsibility for picking up the tab, the Administration wants legislative authority to push the costs onto faculty.

There are more big-ticket items on the horizon. The Administration wants all new public employees, hired after July 1, 2007 to move to Defined Contribution plans. Defined Benefit plans would be banned – so much for local control.

The Faculty Obligation Number is also on the table. The Administration wants districts to exempt vocational education faculty (which are already at a higher rate than academic subjects) from any full-time faculty hiring requirements.

FACCC is taking a very aggressive approach, but its success is ultimately dependent upon how serious we are as faculty. First, FACCC is communicating with legislators, the Administration and the media on how these proposals affect community college faculty. Second, FACCC is actively organizing faculty to counteract dangerous initiatives that may appear on a November statewide special election. Third, FACCC is engaging faculty members in the process of grassroots advocacy to raise faculty voices in Sacramento.

Finally, FACCC is working in coalition with coalition partners, LA College Faculty Guild and Community College League of California to develop an initiative to ensure that our funds and governance structure are not raided by Sacramento.

There's a few things you can **do right away**:

Go to the FACCC website, www.faccc.org and click on the link labeled, "Point & Click - Write Your Legislator!" It'll take you less than three minutes to send a few letters to your representatives.

Attend FACCC Lobby Day in Sacramento on March 14. This is the one day devoted exclusively to community college faculty. Details are available on the FACCC website.

Finally, if you're not a member of FACCC, it's time to get serious about your profession. It's time to join (membership information is available on the FACCC website). If you are a member, recruit a colleague.

We've survived other threats before, and we can live through this one as well – as long as we get serious right away. There's no time to waste.

NOTE: SAVE YOUR FULL TIME SICK LEAVE!!!

By Charlotte Lofft

It has come to my attention that some of you are not aware of the fact that STRS changed its rules on unused sick leave for full time faculty.

Briefly, around 1980 STRS had a rule that any unused sick leave didn't count for retirement. Some of us figured we had to "use it or lose it" and acted accordingly.

About ten (10) years ago STRS changed that rule and now unused sick leave DOES COUNT as service credit for retirement. I was surprised to learn that some faculty have been operating under the old "use it or lose it" mentality when, in fact, if you DON'T use it you WON'T lose it.

So, SAVE your full time sick leave as much as you can, and when you retire it will count toward service credit, which will improve your final monthly compensation upon retirement. If you have any individual questions about your STRS benefit, call them at 1-800-228-5453.

FINALS WEEK: WE KNOW IT'S A PROBLEM

By Charlotte Lofft

The end result of starting a week later in the Fall has been to move Fall Semester Finals week right up against the Christmas holiday. The FA is currently working hard with administration to fix this and still start at the usual time. Dave Fouquet and Dale Wagoner have done a lot of work on this topic, and we expect to have an agreement with administration on how to fix Finals Week for Fall 2005 so that the bulk of the finals are not at the end of the week.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DUE PROCESS: WHERE CLPFA STANDS

By Charlotte Lofft

As you know, there has been a lot of discussion at Chabot on the topic of Academic Freedom and Due Process rights of faculty. The issues arose last August when a Chabot History Professor, Ms. Sherri Yeager, was investigated by administration over a student grievance matter.

The FA has been extremely involved in this matter, and our attorney has advised us that the most appropriate resolution to some of the issues is to negotiate better contract articles on Academic Freedom and Due Process. The District has agreed to this, and we will be very involved in this pursuit when we reopen negotiations this June.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY EVALUATION FORMS: THEY SHOULD BE IN USE

By: Charlotte Lofft

As you know, the faculty ratified the newly negotiated Instructor Evaluation Forms last semester. There are two forms:

Observation of Instruction Form, and
Student Evaluation of Instruction Form.

The forms will be printed and made available for each college very soon. They should be used when evaluating all instructional faculty from now on. The colleges will soon have special Scantron machines to help score these forms.

Thank you for your support of this very important project. Again, Cindy Hicks, Carolyn Arnold, and Sean McFarland of Chabot were the prime developers of the forms with considerable help from others. The forms are consistent with the contract language.

PART TIME SENIORITY: THE STATUS

By Charlotte Lofft

The FA and the District have been negotiating for over two years to have a thorough and complete document on Part Time Seniority to include in the contract. We are almost finished, and when we do complete our work it will be circulated to all FA members for ratification. It has been an unusually long series of negotiations, but the topic is very complex and we have given it a very thorough level of consideration. You should expect to see it for ratification this semester.

UNPAID SABBATICALS: AN OPTION

By Charlotte Lofft

Remember, the FA got a TA about a year ago for faculty who are interested in taking a semester or a year to do a sabbatical but who are not funded for one reason or another. If you are serious about the project and want to go without pay, then apply to the Sabbatical Leave Committee for approval. If you are approved, then you will advance a step on the Salary Schedule the year you are off but will not get paid. You could, however, buy back that time yourself from STRS in order to have it count as Service Credit toward retirement.



Helpful Tips

Accessing voice mail from off-site:

Chabot: dial 723-7000, after the tone hit the 9 key, enter your phone extension and your code.

LPC: dial 373-4991, after the message type in your phone extension, enter your password, and hit 3 to access messages.



Accessing email from home:

LPC: You can gain access to your Group Wise email account through the Web. Type:
<http://gw5mail.clpccd.cc.ca.us:8000>
in the address bar of your computer's browser. Then select the **Group Wise Email Login** link. This page also has links to the home pages for the district and both colleges, as well as a link to Class Web.

Drop Us A Line

All are welcome to respond – Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees and Administrators. Let us know what you think or just share a thought. Sent a letter to the editor or newsletter submissions to: Charlotte Lofft, Chabot or Las Positas College, or email cehlofft@att.net. Please remember that submissions on sensitive subjects may be subject to approval by the Faculty Association E-Board. If possible, please try to have newsletter articles on email.