



Faculty Completes Contract Survey

During several weeks in February, many members of the SOCCCD faculty completed an on-line survey designed by the Faculty Association Negotiating Team.

According to sources in the Faculty Association, the survey was a necessary preliminary step to negotiating a new contract. The current contract expires at the end of June, and the Faculty Association will be presenting a proposal for negotiating a new contract at the March 26th Board of Trustees meeting.

"The survey was designed to discover the faculty's preferences and priorities as we enter into negotiations for a new contract," reported Chief Negotiator Lewis Long. "We were extremely pleased by the results. The on-line format made it easier for a lot of people to participate."

According to Long, 465 full- and part-time faculty members responded to the survey. "The survey itself was a bit long and detailed—it had sixty-five questions—but it really helped the Team in constructing its initial contract proposal to the District. We'd rather understand the priorities of the faculty, and address them in

negotiations at the cost of a tedious survey, than make a mistake in such an important matter."

"The people who responded also gave us many, very helpful comments, with valuable insights to guide the team as they negotiate the contract," stated Negotiating Team member Bill Hewitt. "There are many faculty members with a lot of experience in this District, and it was great to be able to draw on that experience, which was so generously given."

According to Long, the Faculty Association will not be publishing the results of the survey. "That would be the equivalent of laying your poker cards on the table before the other players had bet," Long stated. "Publishing the results would severely limit our ability to negotiate the best contract for the faculty."

However, he did reveal that, in addition to the obvious desire for a fair salary increase, preserving faculty benefits and improving part-time health benefits were high priorities for those who responded. There was also a lot of interest in a retirement package. Overall, the most important items seemed related to the quality of the instructional programs, Long said. "One thing that the survey revealed, which did not surprise me at all, is that this faculty is not just about money. There was a strong emphasis on preserving the educational quality of the District, and creating an environment where we can continue to teach effectively."

Faculty Association to "Sunshine" Initial Contract Proposal at March Board Meeting

At the March 26th meeting of the Board of Trustees, the SOCCCD Faculty Association will publicly present its proposal to initiate the formal negotiation process to develop a new

faculty contract.

The initial or "sunshine" contract proposal is the first step in beginning negotiations. According to the Educational Employment Relations Act, or "Rodda Act", the law which governs collective bargaining for community college faculty, faculty representatives have to present their proposal to the public, as does the District, before negotiations can begin. The faculty's proposal will be published at the March 26th Board meeting, and the District will respond with its proposal at the April meeting, after which negotiations can begin, according to sources in the Association. "According to the anticipated schedule, it looks like we'll actually sit down at the table in May," stated Chief Negotiator Lewis Long.

As described by Association President Ken Woodward, the development of the sunshine proposal was an arduous process.

Attend the Sunshine Pizza Party!

The Faculty Association is hosting a pizza party to celebrate the sunshining of the new contract proposal at Booster's on Marguerite (corner of Marguerite and Avery) before the March 26th Board meeting.

Join us for pizza, and then at 6:30 attend the public comments portion of the Board meeting to show your support for a fair contract.

“The Negotiating Team held several long meetings during which they reviewed the previous contract and the results of the Faculty Contract Survey, and decided which articles and issues they would need to address in the negotiations.”

Long explained that the sunshine proposal does not contain the specific provisions and language that the Association will attempt to negotiate into the contract, but is really just a list of the articles that will be opened for negotiations. “We could have simply listed the articles that we wanted to negotiate, but we actually were a bit more specific than that. Constructing the proposal was a delicate balancing act. We didn’t want to give away too much strategy too early, but we also wanted to give the District a real idea of the issues we hope to address. We really want to work with the District for a fair and quick resolution to the negotiations.”

Long was quick to add that the Association has no desire to sacrifice a good contract to expedite negotiations, however. “We don’t want another long fight, but we’re not going to give up our core objectives just to get it over.”

Added negotiator Lee Haggerty, himself a veteran of negotiations, having served as the Chief Negotiator during the three years it took to develop the previous contract, “We’re here to represent the best interests of the faculty. If we can serve those interests and get the contract resolved quickly, we will. But we’re going to do what it takes to gain a fair contract for the faculty.”

In addition to Long and Haggerty (who is also Association President Elect and CCA Vice President), serving on the Association’s Negotiating Team are Association Treasurer Bill

Hewitt; Paula Jacobs, CCA and NEA Representative, and the Association’s Saddleback Grievance Chair; Walt DeAgüero, the team’s numbers expert; and Stewart Frame, a political science instructor and the part-time representative on the team. Another integral member of the team is Bill Billingsley, Saddleback History professor, and the coordinator of the faculty advisory teams assisting in negotiations.

Faculty Association Announces Membership Drive

The SOCCCD Faculty Association has announced a membership drive to recruit full- and part-time members.

According to President Ken Woodward, this drive is part of the overall effort of the Association to enhance its bargaining position as the faculty begins to negotiate a new contract. “As the Faculty Association begins the negotiations to secure a new contract, it is more important than ever that we demonstrate a high level of membership. Maximizing our membership will increase our ability to represent faculty interests during and after negotiations,” wrote Woodward in a recent letter to the faculty.

Association Treasurer Bill Hewitt pointed out that it’s to the advantage of any faculty member to be a member of the Association. “As a member of the Faculty Association, you not only get the benefits of the CTA and NEA, including various kinds of insurance and legal benefits, but you also gain job protection. If your working conditions are threatened by the administration, the Association’s grievance chair will help you to the best of her ability, but only members can get legal help from CTA. If it gets to the point where you need a lawyer, hiring your own can be

expensive, and the District has several on retainer already.”

Another important benefit, according to Hewitt, is that only members have a say in the operations of the Association. “We represent all of the faculty in contractual issues, but only members have a vote to approve the contract, and get to direct the Association through the Representative Council,” stated Hewitt.

Past President Lewis Long stated that just being an Association member gives a faculty member some muscle in employment disputes. “When you walk into a meeting with an administrator accompanied by a union representative, they take notice, and know that you’re serious. As president, I watched our grievance chairs bring many potentially dangerous situations—which really could have been bad for the faculty member—to a good resolution. They know the contract, and know the administration, and know what can and should be done. It also helps to have the most powerful union [CTA] in California behind you. Without that, it’s just you against a wealthy District.”

Association Secretary Carolyn Gillay noted that membership in the Association is strong, but it has fallen off since the approval of the last contract, largely because of the retirement of full-time faculty members. “We really need to bring in new members to keep the Association going strong in representing the faculty,” Gillay said. “We especially hope to make part-time faculty members aware of the advantages of joining the Association.”

2006-2008 Faculty Association Officers

Ken Woodward—President
Lee Haggerty—President Elect
Bill Hewitt—Treasurer
Carolyn Gillay—Secretary
Lewis Long—Past President
Paula Jacobs—Saddleback Grievance Chair
Kathy Schmeidler—IVC Grievance Chair