



Pasadena City College Classified workers join CFT

“We are so excited to become part of the CFT!” This was the message from Alice Araiza, a 36-year employee of Pasadena City College, when the members of her union, the Instructional Support Services Union (ISSU), voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with the California Federation of Teachers on May 31, 2012, exactly four months after ISSU first approached the CFT.

The ISSU represents 240 classified professional staff at Pasadena City College, and 180 of them are currently members of the union. In their vote, 123 ballots were cast, with 103 members (84%) voting to affiliate with the CFT.

Since its founding in 1991, the ISSU has always been independent of larger statewide/national unions. ISSU’s leadership realized that budget cuts and changes in administration



Celebrating the successful affiliation vote (left to right): Melanie Myers, Organizing Project Staff; Julio Herta, ISSU Board Member; Jeffrey Wojcik, ISSU Board Member; Debra Cantarero, ISSU Board Member; Alice Araiza, ISSU Board Member; Cynthia George, ISSU Board Member; Alma Soto, Organizing Project Staff; Luukia Smith, President of El Camino Classified Employees; Sandra Weese, CFT Organizing Director; and Gary Potts, ISSU Board Member.

have created an increasingly difficult work environment for community college staff. They believed that affiliating with a larger union was the best way to build their union’s power to effectively respond to these changes. According to Araiza, “We were in the process of looking for a union that had strength and a stellar reputation. With the CFT we found all of this

and more.”

After several discussions with the CFT and the AFT staff, ISSU’s board members voted unanimously to recommend to its membership that ISSU affiliate with the CFT. ISSU board members then embarked on an ambitious plan to reach out to their membership, having individual conversations with members leading up to the

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-Alice Araiza, President of ISSU, Pasadena City College

vote to explain why they believed affiliating with the CFT was important and what it would mean for each of them. Each board member identified approximately 25 ISSU members to talk to leading up to the vote. Their hard work was evident in their election victory and the vote margin. More importantly, the work they did in reaching out to their members directly has helped galvanize other members to get more involved in

See ISSU, page 4

Librarians at Hastings Law School join AFT

FOLLOWING AN ENERGIZED meeting last month, the Librarians at Hastings Law School have decided to join the University Council of the American Federation of Teachers (UC-AFT). The UC-AFT currently represents Lecturers and Librarians at the University of California and will incorporate the Hastings Librarians in a new unit.

A majority of the nine professional Librarians at Hastings have signed cards asking to be represented by the UC-AFT. The AFT is processing the new unit through the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) and negotiations for a first contract will begin as soon as the new unit is recognized by PERB. The major initial concern is to get the Hastings Administration to follow existing employee rules and procedures; an enforceable contract will be the key to that.

Eleven locals win grants as Member Organizing Committee gets underway

As part of our commitment to actively support both the strategic development and capacity building work of its member unions, the CFT has established the Member Organizing Committee (MOC) grant program and is directing resources to locals to assist them in developing their organizing interests. The MOC is the part of the Strategic Campaign Initiative's training and coordination effort that is principally focused on organizing.

>Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI) components include: the Political Leaders United to Create Change (PLUCC) program, Local Area Councils, Community Solidarity Grants, and MOC. Taken together, these efforts will expand the political and organizing capacity of the CFT by planning and implementing organizing campaigns to increase union membership, solidifying existing locals, and building power.

Designed to build an activist cadre of CFT members across California, the MOC grants present local unions with an opportunity to participate in a modernized organizing program that can help build capacity, organize new members and challenge anti-union employers. The initial phase of this \$45,000 program is underway, with locals being offered matching grants of up to \$3,500 for work over a three to six-month period.

Thirteen applications were submitted and in April eleven proposals were selected for work to

begin over summer or early fall. These successful proposals—all listed below—will receive monies to hire a MOC organizer and develop a comprehensive strategic organizing plan.

"It's exciting to receive funding that allows our local to focus our energies on increasing membership and member participation," said Natasha Berman, Vice President of Adjunct Faculty United. "This program is so meaningful to our local. What a great opportunity!"

MOC leaders will receive multiple trainings focusing on building knowledge and skills in how to organize members, undertake political and community organizing, develop effective communications abilities, and gain useful train-the-trainer techniques. They will serve as point people focused on developing an extensive plan to build their local's organizing capacity through a set of strategic initiatives that integrates the locals' internal and/or external organizing work with their overall goals and priorities. To enhance

the prospects for success, organizing activities will be integrated into the life of the union.

Ultimately, each of the core MOC leaders will recruit five other members from their local to be active in MOC efforts with the goal of identifying significant local membership to volunteer in organizing activities through either internal membership drives, issue campaigns, or new worker organizing.

"Our plan includes asking 100 fee payers to join the union and gathering contacts at local charter schools in the hopes of organizing them into the PVFT," said Sarah Henne, MOC Organizer, Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers.

United Educators of S.F.
EC/K-12 | \$3,500

Los Angeles College Faculty Guild
Community College | \$3,500

AFT College Staff Guild - Los Angeles
Classified | \$2,500

State Center Federation
Community College | \$2,500

Pajaro Valley Federation
EC/K-12 | \$3,500

Cabrillo College Federation
Community College | \$3,500

Antelope Valley Federation
Classified | \$3,500

Cuesta College Federation
Community College | \$2,000

Adjunct Faculty United
Community College | \$3,000

San Jose/Evergreen Faculty Association
Community College | \$3,500

University Council-AFT
University Council | \$3,497



Alisa Messer, President of the San Francisco Community College District Federation of Teachers, helping to lead the march at the convention.

MELANIE MYERS

Organizing efforts highlighted at CFT annual convention

Three years since the end of the Great Recession, California's working families remain under financial pressure. The median hourly wage is down—lower today than it was ten years ago. Sizeable investments in education are being abandoned as teachers are being laid off and furloughed, the school year shortened, and class sizes increased. Public sector unions are under attack and people are often frustrated and angry.

A significant organizing effort by the CFT and other unions is needed now more than ever. A multi-component Strategic Campaign Initiative designed to increase efficiency and focus more resources on organizing was developed. Over the



ABC Federation of Teachers contingent participating in the March for Fairness at the CFT's annual convention.

past year CFT locals have been stepping up. A number of organizing efforts have been engaged and

there have been numerous successes.

During April's annual CFT convention in San Jose, we celebrated some of that success as key organizing efforts were recognized. Before hundreds of delegates, ten locals from around the state that had demonstrated exemplary organizing were acknowledged.

Two locals, the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees and the Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees, were honored for expanding their membership and capacity by organizing new units in to their locals.

Other locals were recognized for adding the most members over the last year and/or for generat-

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-Jim Mahler, President, AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges

ing the largest percentage increase in membership. The AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges, led the way with 347 new members. "We're proud of the hard work our members did over this past year and honored to receive this award," said Jim Mahler, President of the AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca



CFT President Josh Pechthalt presents the AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges, with the first place award for new member growth.

Community Colleges. Palomar Faculty Federation, which grew by 279 members, received the second highest honor.

Citrus College Adjunct Faculty Federation added 65 members to their local and had the second largest percentage increase of 42%.

Finally, both the Ventura County Federation of School Employees and Part-Time Faculty United at College of the Canyons each increased membership by 20%.

The vision and organizing work of our locals is one of the most powerful elements in uniting union members and moving the CFT forward. Because of their work and other locals within the CFT we are helping working people hold and gain the benefits of union membership, revitalizing our union move-



MELANIE MYERS

Janelle Hampton leads the Peralta Federation of Teachers group at the March for Fairness.

ment and turning around a collapsed economy.

Next is building the CFT-wide Member Organizing Committee and identifying locals that are interested in organizing new members in strategic

sectors. This will require support and involvement at every level of the CFT, and the success of this effort will also hinge on the leadership and hard work of our locals.

ISSU continued from page 1

their union, which is especially important as they prepare for their next round of bargaining.

Playing key supporting roles in the ISSU's affiliation campaign were CFT leaders Velma Butler, President of AFT College Staff Guild and Luukia Smith, President of El Camino Classified Employees Union, as well as CFT Organizing Director Sandra Weese and Organizing Project staff. Both Butler and Smith attended membership and board meetings to give ISSU

members a clear picture of the strength they could achieve by working with the CFT.

With its track record of advocacy on community college issues, its emphasis on new and internal organizing and its commitment to local autonomy and internal democracy, the CFT was the logical choice for the ISSU. According to CFT President Joshua Pechthalt, "This victory is a product of the CFT's Strategic Campaign Initiative and its resulting work. We have

many more opportunities to extend the benefits of membership in the CFT to other independently represented units as well as many not-yet-unionized workers. We hope this will be the first of many more such victories to come."

Araiza and her board share his enthusiasm: "We are more than excited with our new affiliation with the CFT and look forward to working with a nationally recognized and respected union." Congratulations and welcome, ISSU members!

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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