



PFT Wins Parity for Part-Time Faculty

This month, Peralta Federation of Teachers (PFT), Local 1603 signed an agreement with the Peralta Community College District ensuring that part-time faculty would be paid the same rate as full-time faculty for the same work with the same education and experience. Put simply: PFT has achieved the allusive parity. The deal was the culmination of almost ten years of organizing by full and part-time faculty leaders.

Different districts define parity in different ways. PFT has defined parity using an hourly rate determined by dividing the full-time annual salary by the number of weeks of service and hours of work per week. Our goal has been to pay full and



Jennifer Shanoski

Hundreds of PFT members show up at the board of trustees' meeting and demand PT parity.

part-time faculty the same amount of money for the same work with the same experience and education. This approach was central to our organizing strategy because our demand “equal pay for equal work” is straightforward and resonates with our members. Once we had our slogan and definition in hand, we

worked on chipping away at the discrepancy through organizing.

The first step that we took actually distanced us from parity. We elected, as a union, to develop a PT faculty salary schedule commensurate with FT faculty in terms of steps and columns for our CBA in 2013. It was a “zero

cost” arrangement for the district, which meant that we needed to carefully adjust the pay at each step and column. No one took a pay cut, but the discrepancy between full and part-time salaries became very apparent.

Once we accomplished parity in terms of steps and columns, we moved to fill out the revised PT salary schedule. While working to settle our CBA in 2016, we organized a campaign to educate FT faculty on the plight of our PT sisters and brothers. A group of faculty leaders talked to the FT faculty and asked them to sign a commitment to distribute any raise in a way that contributed additional funds to the PT salary schedule. Over two-thirds

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ECFT Unites to Help Save Jobs

Last year in the middle of the pandemic, Plaza de la Raza was about to close its only kitchen facility that provided nutritious meals to the children of Plaza. Management wanted to close the kitchen by Thanksgiving, but members organized through petitions and board meeting presence in order to slow down this hasty decision. It is now March 2021 and the kitchen remains open. Because of organizing efforts, Plaza management sat down with Early Childhood Federation of Teachers (ECFT), Local 1475 leadership to negotiate that if the kitchen needed to be closed, the folks in the kitchen would be relocated to other jobs and have a softer landing in this pandemic; we were able to save 7 of the 10 jobs that would have been lost at Plaza and the rest retired. Edwin Rosales, who has been at Plaza for 20 years said “Our union, for us the workers of Plaza, has been a tremendous help. We are so grateful for the help we received after Plaza told us the kitchen would shut down. That piece of news hit us like a ton of bricks, especially in the middle of COVID-19. We thought we would be out of work during the holidays and were incredibly stressed out. We appreciate our union so much for allowing us a soft landing during all of this.”

—By CFT Project Organizer Laila Molina



Triny Huitron

Local 1475 member Edwin Oswaldo Rodriguez Rosales who works in the Plaza kitchen.

Using Unemployment Workshops to Recruit Part Time Faculty

Part-time faculty have taken a significant hit during this pandemic as low enrollment across the higher education system has led to class cuts and more part-time faculty having to navigate unemployment benefits. This spring the sleepy Employment Development Department (EDD) was hit with a tsunami of applications as the state shut down due to COVID-19. Chronic understaffing and underinvestment in the department along with the tidal wave of applications made filing for unemployment benefits a herculean task, so local unions stepped up to support part-time faculty in navigating these treacherous waters. This article highlights the work of two locals, the Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers (CCFT), Local 4400 and the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT), Local 2279 and how they turned their unemployment workshops into organizing activities that empowered part-time faculty members. But first, let's talk about what unemployment insurance is and why part-time faculty in California are able to access it.

What is unemployment insurance? The EDD administers unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to people who are out of work through no fault of their own. Employers and employees pay into this

program through their state taxes and that money is set aside to support workers when they are no longer employed.

Why are part-time faculty in California eligible to receive unemployment benefits? In the 1970's, a part-time faculty member at City College of San Francisco won a case to access UI benefits in the California Supreme Court. That decision was henceforth known as the Cervisi decision. The Cervisi decision states that part-time faculty and temporary certificated employees at colleges and universities in California are eligible for UI benefits because they have no "reasonable assurance" of continued appointment due to enrollment, funding or program changes.

CCFT continuing the tradition: For the last ten years, CCFT has been hosting "How to File for Unemployment" workshops at the end of each semester. They recruit part-time faculty to attend by emailing their membership list and publicizing it at different meetings they host throughout the semester. They moved their workshop online, like everything else this past year, and created a registration form to streamline the workshop. The registration form asks for name, email, membership status and unemployment filing history. The unemployment filing history

helps the local determine the group that that member will be placed in during the workshop: 1) opening a claim for the first time, 2) need to re-open a claim and 3) just need coaching since they have filed before but don't have a current claim open. That way they can group folks together in smaller groups to help more members. But before people get to the training the local reviews the membership status of all registrants and asks non-members to join the union before they attend. As CCFT Part-Time Faculty Representative and Math Adjunct Sara Decelle said, "Since membership dues pay for our release time which allows us to run these workshops, we make sure all attendees are members prior to sending out the zoom link." But if a part-time faculty member can't pay the membership dues because of hardship the local sends them a link to the contingent world link site that CCFT Part-Time Faculty Representative and Digital Media Adjunct John Govsky created. The link provides part-time faculty with step-by-step directions for opening or reopening an existing claim.

LRCFT planning ahead: At American River College in the Los Rios Community College District, Campus President Oranit Limmaneeprasert and Part-Time Faculty Rep-

resentative Linda Sneed have been partnering since 2019 to provide part-time faculty with a space to ask questions about unemployment insurance. In the past, their local would just email out an unemployment guide their part-time committee created. This past Fall they worked with CFT Organizer Valarie Bachelor to not only host an unemployment workshop but also host "unemployment office hours" where part-time faculty could get more specific support answering questions about their specific situations. Limmaneeprasert found that these spaces were so helpful in recruiting non-members that she's already planning how to promote the workshop for this semester. She said, "In April, I will let non-members know that an added benefit of joining LRCFT is that they will be eligible to attend the unemployment workshops and get real-time help at the unemployment clinics in May."

Want to host an unemployment insurance workshop at your local?: The CFT Organizing Department has stayed up to date on the changes to EDD. Please contact Sandra Weese at sweese@cft.org for any support needs.
-By CFT Organizer Valarie Bachelor

ADFAC Membership Committee Builds Community

Last month's general membership meeting for Adjunct Faculty United (ADFAC), Local 6106 ended with a rousing chorus of "thank you!" and "what would we do without our union!" This is by no means a happy accident. This was after an hour-long discussion on what adjunct faculty members engagement with students has looked like throughout the pandemic. Everything from working overtime, feeling alone and some even feeling more connected was brought up. The hard work and consistent organizing that has been the bedrock of the ADFAC Membership Committee is what leads to exciting meetings and cheers of praise from so many members.

The membership committee, led by chair Tamara Olivos, meets weekly for two-hours to plan membership events and member drives, and these meetings

very much overlap between making a plan and working together. The membership committee has seized on the opportunity of all of us being at home throughout the pandemic to build community among adjuncts that is so difficult due to the precarious and ever-changing work of adjunct faculty.

The general member meetings have given space for adjuncts to identify common issues in their work, and how to plan to fix them. The main solution posed is that adjuncts need to be better organized and in more consistent communication with each other. This has shown the importance of the membership committee to do consistent outreach by phone banking, sending union-wide texts and emails and making sure that all members know

they have a role to play in strengthening our union community.

ADFAC's focus on community has led to not only better communication and meetings, but also to an influx of over 150 membership forms throughout this time. That can range from a new member, to a member re-committing, to changing a COPE donation or to an experienced non-member being impressed by what they see in their union

comrades.

Overall, the Membership Committee supported by the executive board has been a vehicle of building community and power for the union. Adjuncts already face enough institutional hurdles that it's refreshing to see a proactive and organizing-based union cut through the zoom fatigue in an effort to support its members.

-By CFT Project Organizer Grant Stover



Last month's community action event.

UC-AFT Builds Power With Exciting Contract Campaign

For over two years, University Council AFT's lecturers at the University of California have negotiated against the largest and toughest public employer in the state. The fight over job security and equity for teaching faculty has become even more critical throughout the first year of the pandemic.

Last fall UC-AFT launched its contract action team (CAT) composed of dozens of leaders from across the state. CAT members are responsible for activating



UC-AFT members at UC Irvine drop a banner at the University Village in downtown Irvine.

their campus networks during mobilizations like virtual bargaining and car caravans.

Towards the end of February, we had a virtual bargaining session where over 500 members and allies came to show their support and 1036 virtual letters were

sent to the U.C. Regents demanding job security in mid-March. CAT members are making these record breaking numbers of member engagement possible, each person contacting a couple people and showing that organizing by build-

ing relationships is how we grow our power as workers.

We know there is still much to do, but UC-AFT is coming together and fighting as a union.

-By CFT Organizers Erin Conley, Grant Stover and Genean Wisley

PFT Members Use Organizing Tools to Engage Membership on Reopening Issues

Poway Federation of Teachers (PFT), Local 2357 faced a tough situation this fall. In October, elementary schools had reopened to in person instruction in a hybrid model and secondary schools had been serving small groups of students in need. In November, the district wanted to expand secondary on campus learning by moving to an A/B model. Students would be divided into two groups, and each group would receive in person instruction two days per week. Since San Diego County was now in the purple tier, 85% of PFT members did not feel safe returning to their classroom in this learning model.

The district was receiving a great deal of pressure from the community to

reopen secondary schools and felt it was appropriate since they considered it an expansion of their current model. PFT wanted the school board to hear from teachers and understand why this expansion was unsafe. To make sure this message was received and understood by the school board, PFT leadership met with CFT's Organizing Department and developed a plan to organize membership.

PFT President Kelly Logan described the situation, "I knew there was a solution that would work for teachers, students and the district, but we had to organize to ensure our voices would be heard. I had never used Hustle or Action Network before, but both tools were invaluable in reaching our member-

ship and asking them to take action. Hundreds of our members attended the school board meeting, sent emails and submitted public comments, which never would have happened if we hadn't asked them to participate." PFT used Hustle to send text messages to every member asking them to attend the board meeting and Action Network to create an easy-to-use template to directly email each school board member. And it worked! Ultimately the district prioritized safety and postponed the expansion of secondary reopening.

If your local is interested in utilizing these organizing tools please reach out to the organizing department.

-By CFT Project Organizer Charlotte Bowman

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of our FT faculty signed, and we ratified an agreement with widespread support. Everyone got a raise, but our PT faculty got a little more and moved ahead toward parity.

Our last contract campaign was centered almost completely on PT parity. We talked to both full and part-timers about the importance of parity for both. And we centered the conversation on equality. At our board actions, we often had more full-timers than part-timers demanding parity! We held out

and worked under an expired contract for eight months, and in the end our administration and board supported the call.

In February 2020, we settled a three-year contract that committed enough money to close the parity gap halfway and that included an agreement to continue the discussion during the 2020-21 academic year. This year, as we analyzed our finances and reconsidered the agreements, we determined that we were in a fiscal position to fill out the rest of the sched-

ule and close the parity gap once and for all. We signed the agreement in February 2021.

Now that we have a pay schedule that provides full parity for our PT faculty in their regular assignments, we'll work on full inclusion of PT faculty in service work and improving PT benefits. We want to keep the momentum going until PT faculty have comparable rights and privileges to their FT counterparts.

-By PFT President Jennifer Shanoski

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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Sandra Weese

ORGANIZING TEAM

Valarie Bachelor
Erin Conley
Charlotte Bowman
Laila Molina
Grant Stover
Genean Wisley

LAYOUT

Leslye Osegueda

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Get Organized!
2001 Center Street, Suite 600
Berkeley, CA 94704
510-523-5238
510-523-5262 fax
www.cft.org

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All story ideas and submissions should be emailed to Sandra Weese at sweese@cft.org.

