



Faculty Activists Build Solidarity with Unions Across LA

On September 21-28, members of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521 teamed up with union activists from different work sectors across LA to build solidarity through membership outreach at East Los Angeles College (ELAC).

The drive was funded with support from the AFL-CIO and LA County Federation of Labor. This fall, the AFL-CIO issued organizing grants for labor councils to bolster union membership in advance of the upcoming Janus vs AFSCME Supreme Court decision. The LA Labor Fed invited Local 1521 to



Erin Conley

Jenny Ceron, a member organizer from United Food and Commercial Workers, fills out a contact form with Janny Li, math instructor and Local 1521 member.

activists representing the building trades, port workers, child care workers, postal workers, electricians, security officers and film industry workers, our members held over 200 organizing conversations, collected 163 membership cards from faculty members and successfully recruited 46 new members!

The organizing teams focused on having deep one-on-one conversations with part-time faculty while using a common rap to share the same talking points about contract negotiations and the upcoming Supreme Court case, Janus versus AFSCME.

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participate in this program because of the outstanding progress the local

has made with member recruitment.

With support from union

Peralta Federation of Teachers Storms Laney



Valarie Bachelor

Local 1603 member volunteers showing off the membership forms they collected through 1:1 conversations while visiting faculty after classes. Left to right: Berkeley City College Co-Chair, English, Scott Hoshida; Grievance Officer/ COPE Chair, College of Alameda, history, Jeff Sanceri; PFT President, Merritt College, chemistry, Jennifer Shanoski; College of Alameda, Women's Volleyball and Softball Coach Linda King.

In early November the Peralta Federation of Teachers (PFT), launched a membership drive as part of a year-long strategy to recruit and engage members. To prepare for the drive our Database Coordinator/Communications Specialist Kayla Lewis, audited all our membership cards to make sure we had a signed membership form for every member listed. We then worked with CFT Project Staff Lead Organizer Valarie Bachelor to coordinate instructor schedules, recruit volunteers and prepare logistics for the six-day drive. We also assembled new member packets with information on contract victories, contact information for officers and executive board members, a flyer on the next campus-wide membership meeting and our new PFT sticker.

During the six-day drive, we talked to over 300 faculty, librarians, counselors and nurses. Seven CFT staff, five formula funded staff from different locals and 26 PFT member volunteers worked together to collect 224 membership cards including 44 new members. And

importantly, members were able to connect with their union with face-to-face conversations about current issues, recent wins and upcoming challenges. Overall, the drive was a great success and will serve to support the PFT in the face of the Janus decision that is looming. - By PFT President Jennifer Shanoski

Petaluma Federation of Teachers Mobilizes to Win Great Contract

After running a well-organized contract campaign, the Petaluma Federation of Teachers (PFT) ratified their new contract in mid-October with supermajority support from the members.

PFT President Sandra Larsen reached out to the CFT Organizing Project for support earlier in the year because contract negotiations had stalled. The local's executive board approved the contract campaign plan that the organizers and key leaders developed and agreed to participate fully and engage their members and the community, and the results speak for themselves!

- 94% of the unit participated in a week-long work-to-rule action and 92% participated in a one-day unfair labor practice strike.
- The community support was amazing. Attendance was down by 70% on the day of the strike and parents and community members showed up at every school site to support the teachers. They brought water, coffee, snacks and even ordered pizzas.
- Parents came to schools and talked to the press on behalf of the teachers and called school board members and district administrators. They marched with teachers, attended PFT rallies and spoke at school board meetings.



Courtesy of Local 1881

Local 1881 members gather in solidarity while participating in a work-to-rule action.

All of this collective action resulted in PFT settling a good contract. Highlights of the agreement are as follows:

- Approval of successor contract for PFT through June 30, 2019
- 2% increase in the salary schedule retroactive to July 1, 2016
- 1.5% increase in the salary schedule retroactive to July 1, 2017
- \$500 off-the-schedule one-time bonus (prorated based on FTE) for all cur-

rent employees and PFT members who retired as of June 30, 2017

- Effective for the 2017-18 school year, reduce the number of total workdays from 187 to 186 with no reduction in pay (equivalent to a .53% increase in per diem rate) with elimination of Staff Development Day on June 5, 2018
- Newly created salary schedule for psychologists, speech pathologists and nurses, increasing workdays to 193

- MOU on Reduced Workload (a.k.a. “Willie Brown”) for 2018-19
 - 2-year MOU on Protected Concerted Activities
 - 2-year MOU on TK-3 staffing ratio and average class sizes
 - 2-year MOU on the scheduling of teacher workdays and meeting notification
 - Agreement to convene a district-wide committee on health benefits
 - Agreement to convene a committee on professional responsibilities
 - Agreement to begin negotiations process on updating exhibits C & D (stipends)
 - Agreement to discuss retirement incentive for 2018-19
- PFT was also able to get the district to agree to two non-tasked workdays to prepare classrooms for the year. “That was a huge fight,” said Sandra Larsen, “most importantly, we demonstrated that we are a strong united group and the district realizes it.”

- By Organizing Director Sandra Weese



Tom Petrillo

President Randi Weingarten, who urged the Orange County Republican Congressional Representatives to vote against this disastrous bill.

On November 9, members from three Orange County CFT locals joined other union members and progressive partners at the Orange County Federation of Labor to speak out against the Republican tax plan, a bill designed to enrich the wealthy and corporations while hurting educators, the middle class and working families. The keynote speaker was AFT

Local 1521 Holds Their #BoardofThrones Accountable

The Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521 has continued their upward trend of building power this semester by turning out for board of trustees meetings throughout the past few months.

Contract negotiations have been ongoing for the past year but stalled heavily at the end of the summer. Facing a less-than-favorable offer during income negotiations, Local 1521 pushed back, demanding the pay increases members deserved. Unfortunately, the voice of the negotiation team fell on deaf ears - the district's negotiating team stalled their response and their presence at the table well into the fall semester. Local 1521 knew they had to take action, thus beginning strategic demonstrations prior to the board of trustees meetings.

For the sake of holding the district's negotiations team accountable for their bargaining responsibili-

ties, AFT blue-wearing faculty, staff and community members attended rallies before the meetings. Faculty members were also asked to speak during the BOT meetings to explain why a contract was crucial to them personally and how the administration could make legitimate efforts to treat their professors with dignity and respect.

In interest of triggering a social media response, Local 1521's Campaign Action Team (a group of instructors and leaders from all nine campuses who work together to spearhead organizing and activism in Local 1521) came up with "#BoardofThrones" to make the lack of consideration and respect relatable to students and community members. The Game of Thrones analogy was intended to make evident that Local 1521 supports Trustee Andra Hoffman, who has advocated for faculty, and that the bullying she



Chapter President at LA Valley College Ruby Brougham shows her support for LACCD Board Trustee Andra Hoffman.

Frida Caro

endured by fellow Trustee, Scott Svonkin, would not go unnoticed. The Campaign Action Team's approach during this demonstration used Game of Thrones characters to liken Svonkin to child tyrant "Joffrey Baratheon" and Hoffman to heroine "Daenerys Targaryen."

After this demonstration, the trustees acted strategically to limit the abilities of faculty and commu-

nity members to attend meetings by holding the following board of trustees meetings in significantly smaller venues and moving the meeting times from evening to early afternoon, a near-impossible time for a majority of Local 1521 members to attend.

Regardless of such strategies, Local 1521 was able to make their voice heard, persevering in demonstrating their visible people power. As we move to the end of the fall semester, the horizon looks bright with the possibility of a tentative agreement nearing. Details have not been disclosed, but the district's negotiators are finally doing their duty and coming to the table. Local 1521 feels proud of the activism and strength that lead to this victory.

- By Project Organizer Frida Caro



Matthew Hardy

to deliver back home with their own locals in preparation for the upcoming political season. It was great to get an early start on what is sure to be an exciting and eventful year of political action leading up to the November 2018 elections!

On November 15-16, political activists from CFT locals around the state gathered in the CFT Costa Mesa office for a two-day "Political Train-the-Trainer," the first of its kind offered by CFT. Members learned about the political landscape in California, brushed up on the legal ins-and-outs of doing political work and worked through training modules



See the Petaluma Federation of Teachers story on page two.

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Many fee payers were keen to join the union after learning about the nationally organized attacks on the middle class.

Member organizers also approached current members and 117 of them recommitted to the union by signing new membership forms. The new membership forms contain language that better protects our members from national attacks on labor. The new cards require members to make two signatures. The first

signature indicates that the person is a member of the union, and the second indicates that the district must paycheck dues deduction until the member revokes their membership in writing.

To learn more about “Janus proofing” your membership form language, or to schedule a membership drive at your local, please contact your CFT Field Representative.

- By Lead Project Organizer Erin Conley

Activists Unite for a Three-Day Training

In preparation for the joint membership drive by LA County Federation of Labor and Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521’s East Los Angeles College Campus, there was a three-day training led by LA Federation of Labor Organizing Director Chloe Osmer. Leaders, activists and staff from different unions and organizations such as Service Employees International Union, Teamsters, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Postal Workers and the Anti Recidivism Coalition participated in this comprehensive training on how to have one-on-one conversations.

The three-day training agenda was developed by the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and was founded in 1989 with the goals of creating organizers out of workers to build the labor movement for working

people. The training was set up to cover the following six basic steps of having an organizing conversation;

- Step 1- Introduction and listening
- Step 2 – Get the story
- Step 3 – Creating a vision of the union
- Step 4 – Inoculation
- Step 5 - Assess
- Step 6 – Agitate and move to action

After all of the steps were studied in detail, participants would have an opportunity to practice and sharpen their skills by breaking up into small groups to role play.

CFT Project Staff Organizers Frida Caro, Lucy Langworthy and Erin Conley helped facilitate the groups in role plays and explained every day challenges faculty face in community colleges across California. Many of the participants felt a special connection to our faculty

having either attended East Los Angeles College or knowing someone who attended a Community College.

Ultimately, what we discovered was that even though we come from different backgrounds and work in different industries, we have one thing in common; we are all workers who seek respect, fairness and recognition at the workplace. We left inspired with a sense of hope that unions not only will survive these tough times but as long as we continue to organize and help each other we will come out stronger.

As similar projects develop we encourage members to get involved and contact us for information about these great opportunities.

- By Project Organizer Lucy Langworthy

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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Get Organized! is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union.

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